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THE "B. O. W. C."

THE BOYS OF GRAND PRÉ SCHOOL

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A FEARFUL ALARM. — Page 57.

THE BOYS
OF
GRAND PRÉ SCHOOL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE B. O. W. C.," "THE DODGE CLUB," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED.

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THE BOYS OF GRAND PRÉ SCHOOL.



I.

The Camp in the Woods. — Weapons of War. — An Interruption. — An old Friend. — A Mineral Rod. — Tremendous Excitement. — Captain Corbet on the Rampage. — A Pot of Gold.

HE spring recess was over, and the boys of the Grand Pré School were now to turn from play to study. The last day of their liberty was spent by the "B. O. W. C." at their encampment in the woods. They found it in so good a condition, that it was even more attractive than when they left it. The dam had proved water-tight; the pool was full to the brim; the trees overhung with a denser foliage, while all around the fresh-turned earth was covered with young grass, springing forth with that rapidity which marks the growth of vegetation in these colder regions.

It was early in the day when they came up, and they were accompanied by the Perpetual Grand Panjandrum, who carried on his woolly head a basket crammed to the top with a highly-diversified and very luxurious lunch, which it had been the joy of that aged functionary to gather for the present occasion.

"Dar!" he exclaimed, as he put down his burden. "Ef you habn't enough to feed you dis time, den I'm a nigga. Dar's turkeys, an mutton pies, an hoe-cakes, an ham, an ginger-beer, an doughnuts, an de sakes ony knows what. All got up for de special benefit ob de Bee see double bubble Bredren, by de Gran Pandandledrum. You'll be de greatest specims ob chil'en in de woods dat ebber I har tell on. You gwine to be jes like wild Injins, and live in de wilderness like de prophets; an I'm gwine to be de black raven dat'll bring you food. But now," he added, "de black crow must fly back agen."

"O, no, Solomon," said they, as he started. "Don't go. The 'B. O. W. C.' won't be anything without you. Stay with us, and be the Grand Panjandrum."

"Darsn't!"

"O, yes, you must."

"Can't, no how."

"Why not?"

"Darsn't. De doctor'd knock my ole head off. De doctor *mus* hab ole Solomon. Can't get along

widout him. Yah, yah, yah! Why, de whole 'Cademy'd go to tarnal smash ef ole Solomon clar'd out dat way. Gracious sakes! Why, belubbed bredren, I'm sprised at you. An' me de Gran Pandrum!"

"True," said Bart, gravely. "Too true. It was very thoughtless in us, Grand Panjandrum; but don't say that we asked you. Keep dark."

"Sartin," said old Solomon, with a grin. "Dar's no fear but what I'll keep dark. Allus been as dark as any ole darky could be. Yah, yah, yah!" And he rolled up his eyes till nothing could be seen but the whites of them, and chuckled all over, and then, with a face of mock solemnity, bobbed his old head, and said,—

"Far well, mos wos'ful, an' all de res ob de belubbed breddren."

And with these words he departed.

After this, the boys gave themselves up to the business of the day. And what was that? O, nothing in particular, but many things in general.

First and foremost, there was a grand jubilation to be made over the encampment of the "B. O. W. C.;" then a grand lamentation over the end of the recess. Then they talked over a thousand plans of future action. In these woods there were no bears, nor were there any wild Indians; but at any rate, there were squirrels to be shot at, and there were Gaspereaugians to be armed against.

It was certainly necessary, then, that they should have arms of offence and defence.

To decide on these arms was a matter that required long debate. One was in favor of clubs; another, of Chinese crackers; a third had a weakness for boomerangs; a fourth suggested lassos; and a fifth thought that an old cannon, with Bart's pistol, and the gun, would form their most efficient means of defence. But in the course of a long discussion, all these opinions were modified; and the final result was in favor of the comparatively light and trifling arms — bows and arrows. In addition to these, whistles were thought to be desirable, in order to assist in decoying the unsuspecting squirrel, or in warning off the prowling Gaspereau-gian. One powerful cause of their unanimous decision was the pleasing fact, that bows, arrows, and whistles, could be manufactured on the spot by their own jackknives. Ash trees were all around, from which they could shape the elastic bow; tall spruce trees were there, from which they could fashion the light, straight shaft; and there, too, were the well-known twigs, from which they could whittle the willow whistle.

It was jolly — was it not? Could anything be more so? Certainly not. So they all thought, and they gave themselves up, therefore, to the joy of the occasion. They bathed in the pool. They dressed again, and lay on the grass in the sun. They gathered ash, and spruce, and willow. They

collected also large quantities of fresh, soft moss, which they strewed over the floor of the camp, in which they at length sought refuge from the sun, and brought out their knives, and went to work.

Here they sat, then, working away like busy bees, two at bows, two at arrows, and one at whistles, laughing, singing, talking, joking, telling stories, and making such a general and indiscriminate hubbub as had never before been heard in these quiet woods; when suddenly they were startled by a dark shadow which fell in front of the doorway, and instantly retreated, followed by the crackling sound of dried twigs.

In a moment Bart was on his feet.

"*Who goes there?*" he cried, in a loud but very firm voice, while at the same instant the thought flashed into his mind, and into the minds of all the others, —

The Gaspereaugians! —

Full of this thought, they all arose, even while Bart was speaking, with their souls full of a desperate resolution.

"*Who goes there?*" cried Bart a second time, in still louder tones.

A faint crackle among the dried twigs was the only response that came.

"*Who goes there?*" cried Bart a third time, in a voice of deadly determination. "*Speak or — I'LL FIRE!*"

At this menacing and imperative summons there

came a response. It came in the shape of a figure that stole forward in front of the doorway, slowly and carefully; a figure that disclosed to their view the familiar form, and the meek, the mild, the venerable, and the well-remembered face of Captain Corbet! Greeted with one universal shout of joy.

"Here we air agin, boys," said the venerable commander, as he stepped inside, and looked all around with a scrutinizing glance. "We've ben together over the briny deep, an here's the aged Corbet, right side up, in good health, and comes hopin to find you in the same."

"Corbet! Corbet! Captain Corbet! Three cheers for the commander of the great expedition to Blomidon!" And upon this there rang out three cheers as loud and as vigorous as could be produced by the united lungs of the five boys.

Captain Corbet regarded them with an amiable smile.

"Kind o' campiin out?" said he at last. "I thought by what you told me you'd be up to some-thin like this, an I come down thinkin I'd find you; and here we air."

"How's the baby, captain?" asked Bart.

"In a terewly wonderful good state of health and sperits — kickin an crowin like mad; ony jest now he's sound asleep — bless him. I've ben a-nussin of him ever sence I arrove, which I feel to be a perroud perrivelege, an the highest paren-tial jy."

"That's right; and now sit down an sing us a song."

"Wal, as to settin, I'll set; but as to singin, I hain't the time nor the vice. The fact is, I come down on *business*."

At this Captain Corbet's face assumed an expression of deep and dark mystery. He had a stick in his hand about a yard long, rather slender, and somewhat dirty. He now held out this stick, looked at it for a few moments in indescribable solemnity, then closed his eyes, then shook his head, and then, putting the stick behind his back, he drew a long breath, and looked hard at the boys.

"Business?" said Arthur; "what kind of business?"

Captain Corbet looked all around with an air of furtive scrutiny, and then regarded the boys with more solemnity than ever. He held out his stick again, and regarded it with profound earnestness.

"It's a diskivery," said he.

"A discovery?" asked Bart, full of wonder at Captain Corbet's very singular manner; "a discovery? What kind of a discovery?"

"A diskivery," continued Captain Corbet; "and this here stick," he continued, holding it forth, "this here stick is the identical individooal article that's made the diskivery to me. 'Tain't everybody I'd tell; but you boys air different. I trust youns. Do you see that?" shaking the stick; "do you know what that air is? Guess, now."

"That?" said Bart, somewhat contemptuously.
"Why, what's that? It's only a common stick."

At this Captain Corbet seemed deeply offended. He caressed the stick affectionately, and looked reproachfully at Bart.

"A stick?" said he at last; "a common stick? No, *sir*. 'Tain't a stick at all. Excuse *me*. Thar's jest whar you're out of your reckonin. 'Tain't a stick at all; no, nor anythin like it."

"Well," said Bart, "if that isn't a stick, I should like to know what you call one."

"O, you'll know — you'll know in time," said Captain Corbet, whose air of mystery now returned, and made the boys more anxious than ever to find out the cause.

"If it isn't a stick, what is it?" asked Bruce.

"Wal — it ain't a stick, thar."

"What is it, then?"

"It's — a — ROD," said Captain Corbet, slowly and impressively.

"A rod? Well, what then? Isn't a rod a stick?"

"No, *sir*, not by a long chalk. Besides, this here's a very pecooliar rod."

"How's that?"

Captain Corbet rose, went to the door, looked on every side with eager scrutiny, then returned, and looked mysteriously at the boys; then he stepped nearer; then he bent down his head; and finally he said, in an eager and piercing whisper, —

“ *It's a mineral rod !* ”

“ A mineral rod ? ”

“ Yes, *sir*,” said Captain Corbet, stepping back, and watching the boys eagerly, so as to see the full effect of this startling piece of intelligence.

The effect was such as might have satisfied even Captain Corbet, with all his mystery. A mineral rod ! what could be more exciting to the imagination of boys ? Had they not heard of such things ? Of course they had. They knew all about them. They had read of mineral rods as they had read of other things. They had feasted their imaginations on pirates, brigands, wizards, necromancers, alchemists, astrologers, and all the other characters which go to make up the wonder-world of a boy ; and among all the things of this wonder-world, nothing was more impressive than a mineral rod. This was the magic wand that revealed the secrets of the earth — this was the resistless “ sesame ” that opened the way to the hoarded treasures of the bandit — this was the key that would unlock the coffers, filled with gold, and buried deep in the earth by the robber chief or the pirate captain. What wonder, then, that the very mention of that word was enough to excite them all in an instant, and to turn their minds from good-natured contempt to eager and irrepressible curiosity ?

“ I'm no fool,” said Captain Corbet, impressively — “ I know what I'm a doin. I got this mineral rod last year, and went round everywhar over the

hull country. It didn't come natral, at fust, but I kep on. You see I had a motive. It wan't myself. It wan't Mrs. Corbet. It was the babby! He's a growin, and I'm a declinin; an afore he grows to be a man, whar'll I be? I want to have somethin to leave him. That's what sot me up to it. Nobody knows anythin about it. I darsen't tell Mrs. Corbet. I have to do it on the sly. But when I saw you, I got to love you, an I knew I could trust you. For you see I've made a diskivery, an I'm goin to tell you; an that's what brought me down here. Besides, you're all favored by luck; an ef I have your help, it'll be all right."

"But what *is* the discovery?" asked the boys, on whom these preliminary remarks made a still deeper impression.

"Wal—as I was a sayin," resumed the captain—"I've been a prowlin round and round over the hull country with the mineral rod. It's full of holes. Them old Frenchmen left lots of money. That's what I'm a huntin arter, and that's what I've found."

These last few words, added in a low but penetrating whisper, thrilled the boys with strange excitement.

"Have you really found anything?" asked Bart, eagerly. "What is it? When? Where? How?"

Captain Corbet took off his hat very solemnly,

and then, plunging his hand into his pocket, he drew forth a crowd of miscellaneous articles, one by one. He thus brought forth a button, a knife, a string, a fig of tobacco, a pencil, a piece of chalk, a cork, a stone, a bit of leather, a child's rattle, a lamp-burner, a bit of ropeyarn, a nail, a screw, a hammer, a pistol barrel, a flint, some matches, a horse's tooth, the mouthpiece of a fog-horn, a doll's head, an envelope, a box of caps, a penholder, a nut, a bit of candy, a piece of zinc, a brass cannon, a pin, a bent knitting needle, some wire, a rat skin, a memorandum book, a bone, a squirrel's tail, a potato, a wallet, half of an apple, an ink bottle, a lamp-wick, "Bonaparte's Oraculum," a burning glass, a corkscrew, a shaving brush, and very many other articles, all of which he put in his hat in a very grave and serious manner.

He then proceeded with his other hand to unload his other pocket, the contents of which were quite as numerous and as varied; but in neither of the pockets did he find what he wished.

"Wal, I declar!" he cried, suddenly. "I remember, now, I put it in my waistcoat pocket."

Saying this, he felt in his waistcoat pocket, and drew forth a copper coin, which he held forth to the boys with a face of triumph.

Bart took it, and the others crowded eagerly around him to look at it. It was very much worn; indeed, on one side it was quite smooth, and the marks were quite effaced; but on the other side

there was a head, and around it were letters which were legible. They read this : —

LOUIS XIV. ROI DE FRANCE.

All of which sank deep into their souls.

"It's an old French coin," said Bruce at length. "Where did you get it? Did you find it yourself?"

Captain Corbet made no reply, but only held up his mineral rod, and solemnly tapped it.

"Did you find it with that?" asked Bart.

The captain nodded with mysterious and impressive emphasis.

"Where?"

"Mind, now, it's a secret."

"Of course."

"Wal," said Captain Corbet slowly, "it's a very serous undertakin; an ef it wan't for the babby, an me hopin to leave him a fortin, I wouldn't be consarned in it. Any how, you see, as I was tellin, I ben sarchin; an not long before we sailed I was out one day with the mineral rod, an it pinte — it pinte — it did — in one spot. It's an ole French cellar. Thar's a pot of gold buried thar, boys — that I know. The mineral rod turned down hard."

"And did you dig there?" asked Bart, anxiously. "Did you try it?"

Captain Corbet shook his head.

"I hadn't a shovel. Besides, I was afeard I might be seen. Then, agin, I wanted help."

"But didn't you find this coin there?"

Captain Corbet again shook his head.

"No," said he. "I found that thar kine in another cellar; but in that cellar the rod didn't railly *pint*. So I didn't dig. I went on a sarchin till I found one whar it did pint. It shows how things air. Thar's money — thar's other kines a buried in the ground. Now I tell you what. Let's be pardners, an go an dig up that thar pot of gold. 'Tain't at all in my line. 'Tain't everybody that I'd tell. But you've got my confidence, an I trust on you. Besides, you've got luck. No," continued the captain in a dreamy and somewhat mournful tone, "'tain't in my line for me, at my age, to go huntin arter buried treasure; but then that babby! Every look, every cry, every crow, that's given by that bee-lesseed offsprin, tetches my heart's core; an I pine to be a dewin somethin for him — to smooth the way for his infant feet, when poor old Corbet's gone. For I can't last long. Yes — yes — I must do it for the babby."

Every word that Captain Corbet uttered, except, perhaps, his remarks about the "babby," only added to the kindling excitement of the boys. A mineral rod! a buried treasure! What could be more overpowering than such a thought! In an instant the camp in the woods seemed to lose all its attractions in their eyes. To play at camping out — to humor the pretence of being bandits — was nothing, compared with the glorious reality of actually digging in the ground, under the guidance

of a real mineral rod, for a buried pot of gold; yet it ought to be explained, that, to these boys, it was not so much the value of any possible treasure that might be buried and exhumed which excited them, as the idea of the enterprise itself—an enterprise which was so full of all the elements of romantic yet mysterious adventure. How tremendous was the secret which had thus been intrusted to them! How impressive was the sight of that mineral rod! How overpowering was the thought of a pot of gold, buried long ago by some fugitive Frenchman! How convincing was the sight of that copper coin! And, finally, how very appropriate was such an enterprise as this to their own secret society of the “B. O. W. C.”! It was an enterprise full of solemnity and mystery; beset with unknown peril; surrounded with secrecy and awe; a deed to be attempted in darkness and in silence; an undertaking which would supply the “B. O. W. C.” with that for which they had pined so long—a purpose.

“But *is* there any money buried?” asked Phil.

“Money buried?” said Bart. “Of course, and lots of it. When the French Acadians were banished, they couldn’t take their money away. They must have left behind all that they had. And they had lots of it. Haven’t you read all about ‘Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer of Grand Pré’? Of course you have. Well, if he was the wealthiest, others were wealthy. That stands to

reason. And if so, what did they do with their wealth? Where did they keep their money? They hadn't any banks. They couldn't buy stock, and all that sort of thing. What did they do with it, then? What? Why, they buried it, of course. That's the way all half-civilized people manage. That's what the Hindoos do, and the Persians, and the Chinese. People call it 'hoarding.' They say there's enough gold and silver buried in the earth in India and China to pay off the national debt; and I believe there's enough money buried about here by the old Acadians to buy up all the farms of Grand Pré."

Bart spoke earnestly, and in a tone of deep conviction which was shared by all the others. The copper coin and the mineral rod had done their work. They lost all taste for the camp, and its pool, and its overarching trees, and its seclusion, and were now eager to be off with Captain Corbet. Before this new enterprise even the greatest of their recent adventures dwindled into insignificance. Captain Corbet, with his magic wand, stood before them, inviting them to greater and grander exploits.

A long conversation followed, and Captain Corbet began to think that the pot of gold was already invested. The boys took his mineral rod, which he did not give up until he had been for a long time coaxed and entreated; they passed it from hand to hand; each one closely inspected it, and

balanced it on his finger so as to test the mode in which it worked; each one asked him innumerable questions about it, and gave it a long and solemn trial.

“But where is the place?” asked Bart. “Is it very far from here?”

Captain Corbet shook his head.

“’Tain’t very far off,” said he. “I’ll show you.”

“Which way?” asked Tom.

The captain waved his rod in the direction of the Academy.

“What! That way?” asked Bart. “Are the cellars there?”

“Yes.”

“You don’t mean those. What! Just behind the Academy?”

“Yes.”

“It’s the ‘Old French Orchard,’ then,” cried Bart — “the ‘Old French Orchard.’ The only cellars in that direction are under the old French apple trees, on the top of the hill. Is that the place you mean, captain?”

“That’s the indentical individool spot,” said Captain Corbet.

“The ‘Old French Orchard’!” exclaimed the other boys in surprise; for they had expected to be taken to some more remote and very different place.

“Wal,” said Captain Corbet, “that thar place’s a very pecooliar place. You see thar’s a lot o’

cellars jest thar, an then the ole apple trees — they're somethin. The ole Frenchman, that lived up thar, must hev ben rich."

"The fact is," exclaimed Bart, "Captain Corbet's right. The Frenchman that lived on that place must have been rich. For my part, I believe that he was no other than 'Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer in Grand Pré.' He buried all his money there, no doubt. This is one of his French sous. Come along, boys; we'll find that pot of gold."

And with these words they all set out along with Captain Corbet for the "Old French Orchard."

II.

*The Old French Orchard. — The French Acadians.
— The ruined Houses. — Captain Corbet in the
Cellar. — Mysterious Movements. — The Mineral
Rod — Where is the Pot of Gold? — Excitement.
— Plans, Projects, and Proposals.*

HE hill on which Grand Pré Academy was built sloped upwards behind it, in a gentle ascent, for about a mile, when it descended abruptly into the valley of the Gaspereaux. For about a quarter of a mile back of the Academy there were smooth, cultivated meadows, which were finally bounded by a deep gully. At the bottom of this there ran a brawling brook, and on the other side was that dense forest in which the boys built their camps. Here, on the cleared lands just by the gully, was the favorite play-ground of the school. Happy were the boys who had such a play-ground. High up on the slope of that hill, it commanded a magnificent prospect. Behind, and on either side, were dense, dark woods; but in front there stood revealed a boundless scene. Beneath was the Academy. Far down to the right spread away the

dike lands of Grand Pré, bounded by two long, low islands, which acted as a natural barrier against the turbulent waters; and farther away rose the dark outline of Horton Bluff, a wild, precipitous cliff, at the mouth of the Gaspereaux River, marking the place where the hills advanced into the sea, and the marsh lands ended. Beyond this, again, there spread away the wide expanse of Minas Bay, full now with the flood tide — a vast sheet of blue water, dotted with the white sails of passing vessels, and terminated in the dim and hazy distance by those opposite shores, which had been the scene of their late adventures — Parrsboro', Pratt's Cove, and the Five Islands. Far away towards the left appeared fields arrayed in the living green of opening spring; the wide plains of Cornwallis, with its long reaches of dike lands, separated by ridges of wood land, and bounded by the dark form of the North Mountain. Through all this, from afar, flowed the Cornwallis River, with many a winding, rolling now with a full, strong flood before them and beyond them, till, with a majestic sweep, it poured its waters into that sea from which it had received them. Finally, full before them, dark, gloomy, frowning, with its crest covered with rolling fog-clouds, and the white sea-foam gleaming at its base, rose the central object of this magnificent scene, — the towering cliff — Blomidon.

Such was the scene which burst upon the eyes

of the boys as they crossed the brook, and ascended the other side of the gully. Familiar that scene was, and yet, in spite of its familiarity, it had never lost its attractions to them; and for a moment they paused involuntarily, and looked out before them. For there is this peculiarity about the scenery of Grand Pré, that it is not possible for it to become familiar, in the common sense of the word. That scene is forever varying, and the variations are so great, that every day has some new prospect to offer. Land, sea, and sky, all undergo incessant changes. There is the Basin of Minas, which is ever changing from red to blue, from a broad sea to a contracted strait, hemmed in by mud flats. There is the sky, with its changes from deepest azure to dreamy haze, or impenetrable mist. There are rivers which change from fulness to emptiness, majestic at the flow of tide, indistinguishable at the ebb. There is Blomidon, which every day is arrayed in some new robe; sometimes pale-green, at other times deep purple; now light-gray, again dark-blue; and thus it goes through innumerable changes, from the pale neutral tints which it catches from the overhanging fogs, down through all possible gradations, to a darkness and a gloom, and a savage grandeur, which throw around it something almost of terror. Then come the seasons, which change the wide plains from brown to green, and from green to yellow, till winter appears, and robes all in white, and piles up

for many a mile over the shallow shores, and in the deep channels of the rivers, the ever accumulating masses of heaped-up ice.

Yet all the time, through all the seasons, while field and flood, river and mountain, sea and forest, are thus changing their aspect, there hangs over all an atmosphere which brings changes more wonderful than these. The fog is forever struggling for an entrance here. The air in an instant may bring forth its hidden watery vapors. High over Blomidon the mist banks are piled, and roll and writhe at the blast of the winds from the sea. Here the mirage comes, and the eye sees the solid land uplifted into the air; here is the haze, soft and mysterious as that of Southern Italy, which diffuses through all the scene an unutterable sweetness and tenderness. Here, in an instant, a change of wind may whirl all the accumulated mists down from the crest of Blomidon into the vale of Cornwallis, and force vast masses of fog-banks far up into the Basin of Minas, till mountain and valley, and river and plain, and sea and sky, are all alike snatched from view, and lost in the indistinguishable gray of one general fog.

The boys then had not grown wearied of the scene. Every day they were prepared for some fresh surprise, and they found in this incessant display of the glory of nature, with its never-ending variety and its boundless scope, something which so filled their souls and enlarged their minds, that

the perpetual contemplation of this was of itself an education. And so strong was this feeling in all of them, that for a moment all else was forgotten, and it was with an effort that they recollected the captain and his mineral rod.

Upon this they turned to carry out their purpose.

In this place, and close by where they were standing, were several hollows in the ground, which were well known to be the cellars of houses once occupied by French Acadians. At a little distance were a number of apple trees, still growing, and now putting forth leaf, yet so old that their trunks and branches were all covered with moss, and the fruit itself, on ripening, was worthless. These trees also belonged to the former owners of the houses — the fallen — the vanished race.

And at the bottom of one of these holes Captain Corbet was standing, solemnly balancing the mineral rod on one finger, and calling to the boys to come and watch how it “pinted” to the buried pot of gold.

These cellars were but a few out of hundreds which exist over the country, as sad memorials of those poor Acadians who were once so ruthlessly driven into exile. The beautiful story of Evangeline has made the sorrows of the Acadians familiar to all, and transformed Grand Pré into a place of pilgrimage, where the traveller may find on

every side these sad vestiges of the former occupants. Into this beautiful land the French had come first; they had felled the forests, drained the marshes, and reared the dikes against the waters of the sea. Here they had increased and multiplied, and long after Acadie had been ceded to the British they lived here unmolested. They still cherished that patriotic love for France which was natural, and in the wars did not wish to fight against their own countrymen; but, on the other hand, they resisted the French agents who were sent among them to excite insurrection. A few acted against the British, but the majority were neutral. At length the British enlarged their operations in Acadie, sent out thousands of emigrants, and began to settle the province. Then came a life and death struggle between Englishmen and Frenchmen, which spread over all America, far along the Canadian frontier, and along the Ohio Valley, and southward to the Gulf of Mexico. The Frenchmen of Acadie were looked on with suspicion. An effort was soon to be made against Louisbourg and Quebec, by which it was hoped that the French power would be crushed into the dust. But the Acadians stood in the way. They were feared as being in league with the French and the Indians. Their pleasant lands, also, were eagerly desired for an English population. And so it was determined to banish them all, and in the most cruel way conceivable. Ordinary banishment

would not do; for then they might wander to Canada, and add their help to their brethren: so it was determined to send them away, and scatter them over the coast of America. This plan was thoroughly carried out. From Grand Pré two thousand were taken away — men, women, and children; families were divided forever, the dearest friends were parted never to meet again. Their fields were laid waste; their houses, and barns, and churches, were given to the flames; and now the indelible traces of this great tragedy may be seen in the ruined cellars which far and wide mark the surface of the country. Far and wide also may be seen their trees, — the apple trees, — moss-grown, and worn out, and gnarled, and decaying; the broad-spreading willow, giving a grateful shade by the side of brooks; and the tall poplar, dear to the old Acadian, whose long rows may be seen from afar, rising like so many monuments over the graves of an extinct race.

Where is the thatch-roofed village, the home of Acadian farmers,
Men whose lives glided on like rivers that water the wood lands,
Darkened by shadows of earth, but reflecting an image of heaven?
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the farmers forever departed
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the mighty blasts of October
Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and sprinkle them far o'er the
ocean.

Nought but tradition remains of the beautiful village of Grand Pré.

Now, the idea of the boys was not by any means so absurd as may be supposed. It was within the

bounds of possibility that a pot of money might be in a French cellar. These Acadians had some wealth; they had been in the habit of hoarding it by burying it in the earth, and the bottom of the cellar was by no means an unlikely place. So sudden had been their seizure, that none of them had any time whatever to exhume any of their buried treasure, so as to carry it away with him. All had been left behind — cattle, flocks, herds, grain, houses, furniture, clothes, and of course money. Vague tradition to this effect had long circulated about the country, and there was a general belief that money was buried in the ground, where it had been left by the Acadians. So, after all, the boys were only the exponents of a popular belief.

The cellar might have originally been five or six feet in depth, but the falling of the walls and the caving in of the earth had given it a shape like a basin; and the depth at the centre was not more than four feet below the surrounding level. Around the edge were some stones which marked the old foundation.

The boys came up to Captain Corbet, and watched him quietly, yet very curiously. As for the illustrious captain, he felt to the utmost the importance of the occasion. He was now no longer the captain of a gallant bark. He had become transformed into a species of necromancer. Instead of the familiar tiller, he held in his hand the rod of the magician. All the solemnity of such a position was

They drew nearer, they crowded up closer to Captain Corbet, and watched that rod as though all their future lives depended upon the vibration of that slender and rather dirty stick.

Not a word was spoken. Lower and lower went the rod.

It trembled on its balance ! It quivered on Captain Corbet's forefinger, as the lower end went down and dragged the rod out of its even poise. It slipped, and then — it fell.

It fell, down upon the very middle of the cellar, and lay there, marking that spot, which to the minds of the boys seemed now, beyond the possibility of a doubt, to be the place where lay the pot of gold.

"Thar," said Captain Corbet, now breaking the silence. "Thar. You see with your own eyes how it pints. That thar is the actool indyvidool place ; an this here's the dozenth time it's done it with me. O ! it's thar. I knowed it."

As the rod fell, a thrill of tremendous excitement had passed through the hearts of the boys, and their belief in its mystic properties was so strong, that it did not need any assurances from Captain Corbet to confirm it. Yes, beyond a doubt, there it was, just beneath, a short distance down — the wonderful, the mysterious, the alluring pot of gold.

At last the silence was broken by Tom.

"Well, boys," said he, "what are we going to do about it ?"

"The question is," said Phil, "shall we dig it or not? I move that we dig it."

"Of course," said Bruce, "we'll dig it. There's only one answer to that question. But when? The fellows are around here all the time."

"We'll have to do it after dark," said Arthur.

"Early in the morning would be the best time, I think," said Bruce, a little anxiously.

"No," said Bart; "there's only one time, and one hour, to dig money, and that time is midnight, and the hour twelve sharp. If we're going to dig for a pot of money, we'll have to do it up in proper shape."

"Nonsense," said Bruce, who still spoke in a rather anxious tone. "What are you talking about? Early morning is the time."

"Early morning!" said Bart; "why, man alive, we'll want several hours, and it'll be early morning before we're done. If we begin at early morning we can't do anything. Some of the fellows are always up here before breakfast. No! From midnight to cock-crow, that's the orthodox time. Besides," added Bart, mysteriously, "there are certain ceremonies we'll have to perform, that can only take place at night."

"Nonsense!" said Bruce; "let's tell the other fellows, and we'll all dig together in broad day."

"Tell the other fellows! What in the world do you mean?" cried Bart. "Bruce Rawdon, are you crazy?"

No! Bruce Rawdon was not crazy. He was only a little superstitious, and had a weakness with regard to ghosts. He had as brave and stout a heart as ever beat, with which to confront visible dangers and mortal enemies; but his stout heart quailed at the fanciful terrors of the invisible. Yet he saw that there was no help for it, and that he would have to choose the midnight hour. So he very boldly made up his mind to face whatever terrors the enterprise might have in store.

"The fact is," said Bart, "we ourselves — we, the 'B. O. W. C.' — must do it. It would be dishonor to invite the other boys. This belongs to us. We're a secret and mystic order. We've never yet had anything in particular to do. Now's our time, and here's our chance. We're bound to get at that pot of gold. The captain, of course, must be with us, and one other only; that is old Solomon. As Grand Panjandrum, he must be here, and share our labors."

"We'll have to get spades," said Arthur. "I suppose Solomon can manage that."

"Spades?" said Bart; "I should think so, and fifty other things. We must have lights. We'll have to make a row of them around the edge of the hole."

"A row of them?" said Phil. "Nonsense! Two will do."

"No," said Bart. "You must always have a row of burning lamps around whenever you dig for

money. They must be kept burning too. One of us must watch the lamps: woe to us if any one of them should go out! You see it isn't an ordinary work. It's magic! Digging up a pot of gold must be done carefully. Every buried pot of gold can only be got up according to a regular fashion. I've got a book that tells all about it — how many lights, how many spades, the proper time, and all that. Above all, we'll have to remember to keep as silent as death when we're working, and never speak one word. Why, I've heard of cases where they touched the pot of gold, and just because they made a sort of cry of surprise, the pot at once sunk down ever so much farther. And so they had to do it all over again."

Did Bart believe all this nonsense that he was talking? It is very difficult to say. He was not at all superstitious; that is to say, his fancies never affected his actual life. He would walk through a graveyard at midnight as readily as he would go along a road. At the same time his brain contained such an odd jumble of wild fancies, and his imagination was so vivid, that his ordinary common sense was lost sight of. He could follow the leadings of a very vivid imagination to the most absurd extent. If he had been really, in his heart, superstitious, he would have shrunk from the terrors of this enterprise. But his real faith was not concerned at all. He was playing — very earnestly indeed, and with immense excitement,

yet still he was only playing—at digging for money, just as he had been playing at being a bandit, or a pirate. He was quite ready, therefore, to comply with any amount of superstitious forms. The rest, also, were very much the same way, except Bruce. He alone looked upon the matter with anxiety; but he fought down his fear by an effort of pure courage.

It was only imagination, then; but still, so strong was their imagination, that it made the whole plan one of sober reality, and they discussed it as though it were so.

“You see,” said Bart, as he threw himself headlong into the excitement of the occasion—“you see, we’ve got to be careful. The pot of gold has been revealed by the mineral rod. If we had dug it up by accident, of course we could have got it without any trouble. But it has been revealed by magic, and must be gained by the laws of magic. I’ve got that Book of Magic, you know, and it tells all about it. Lights around, in number any multiple of three, or seven. Those are magic numbers. Our number inside the magic circle will be seven. That’s one reason why I want old Solomon. We’ll have to keep silent, and not say a word. We must not begin till midnight, and we cannot go on after cock-crow. O, we’ll manage it. Hurrah for the ‘B. O. W. C’!”

And so, after some further discussion, they decided to make the attempt that night. It was to

be the last night of the holidays, and was more convenient than any other. Captain Corbet was to meet them with his rod and a spade. They were to come up with old Solomon, and all the other requisites.

With these arrangements they parted solemnly from Captain Corbet, and went back to the Academy, bowed down by the burden of a most tremendous secret.

III.

A Deed of Darkness. — The Money-diggers. — The dim Forest and the Midnight Scene. — Incantation assisted by Cæsar, the Latin Grammar, and Euclid. — Sudden, startling, and terrific Interruption. — Flight of the "B. O. W. C." — They rally again.

MIDNIGHT came. Before that time the "B. O. W. C." had prepared themselves for the task before them. They were arrayed in the well-worn and rather muddy clothes in which they had made their memorable expedition. Solomon was with them, dressed in his robes of office. The venerable Grand Panjandrum had gathered all the lanterns that he could collect; but as these were only five in number, and as they wanted twenty-one, there had been some difficulty. This had, at length, been remedied by means of baskets, pails, and tin kettles; for it was thought that by putting a candle in a pail, or something of that sort, it would be protected from the wind. Solomon also was provided with matches, so as to kindle the light at once if it should be blown out;

and Bart tried, in the most solemn manner, to impress upon him the necessity of watchfulness. It was Solomon's duty to watch the lights, and nothing else; the others were to dig. Besides the pails, pots, lanterns, candlesticks, and tin kettles, they carried a pickaxe, four spades, and the Bust, — which last was taken in order to add still more to the solemnity of the occasion, — and after distributing this miscellaneous load as equally as possible among the multitude, they at length set out.

The Academy was all silent, and all were hushed in the depths of slumber; so they were able to steal forth unobserved, and make their way to the "Old French Orchard."

The night was quite dark, and as they walked up the hill, the scene was one of deep impressiveness. Overhead the sky was overcast, and a fresh breeze, which was blowing, carried the thick clouds onward fast through the sky. The moon was shining; but the dense clouds, as they drove past, obscured it at times; and the darkness that arose from this obscurity was succeeded by a brighter light as the moon now and then shone forth. Before them rose the solemn outline of the dark forest, gloomy and silent, and the stillness that reigned there was not broken by a single sound.

After walking some distance, they stopped, partly to rest, and partly to see if they were followed. As they turned, they beheld beneath them a scene equally solemn, and far grander. Immediately be

low lay the dark outline of the Academy, and beyond this the scenery of Grand Pré; on the right extended the wide plains, now almost lost to view in the gloom of night; on the left the Cornwallis River went winding afar, its bed full, its waters smooth and gleaming white amid the blackness that bordered it on either side. Overhead the sky arose, covered over with its wildly-drifting clouds, between which the moon seemed struggling to shine forth. Beneath lay the dark face of the Basin of Minas, which faded away into the dimness of the opposite shore, while immediately in front, — now, as always, the centre of the scene, — rose Blomidon, black, frowning, sombre, as though this were the very centre from which emanated all the shadows of the night.

At the top of the hill they met Captain Corbet, who had a spade on his shoulder.

"It's rayther dark," said he, in a pensive tone. "Ef I'd aknowed it was to be so dark, I'd postponed it."

"Dark!" said Bart, cheerily; "not a bit of it. It's just right. We want it just this way. It's the proper thing. You see, if it were moonlight, we'd be discovered; but this darkness hides us. The moon peeps out now and then, just enough to make the darkness agreeable. This is just the way it ought to be."

They moved on in silence towards the spot. Here, on three sides, the forest encircled them;

below them was the deep, dark gully ; and the shadows of the forest were so heavy, that nothing could be distinguished at a distance. Captain Corbet, usually talkative, was now silent and pensive, and uttered an occasional sigh. As for Solomon, he did not say one word. The whole party stood for a moment in silence, looking into the cellar.

"Come, boys," said Bart, at length, "hurry up. The first thing we've got to do is to make the arrangements. We must arrange the lamps."

Saying this, they all proceeded to put down their lanterns, pots, kettles, pails, and baskets, around the cellar, so as to encircle it. Inside each of the pots, kettles, pails, and baskets, a candle was put, while the Bust was placed at the end of the cellar nearest the wood.

"Now," said Bart, "let's all go into the cellar, and Solomon will light the candles."

They went into the cellar ; but Solomon showed so much clumsiness in lighting them, that Bart had to do it. This was soon accomplished. The surrounding forest sheltered them from the wind, and the lights did not flicker very much, except at times when an occasional puff stronger than usual would be felt. Once a light was blown out ; but Bart lighted it again, and then they all burned very well.

So there they stood, in the cellar, with the circle of lights around them, under a dark sky, at the midnight hour.

"I feel solemn," said Captain Corbet, after a long silence; "I feel deeply solemn."

"Solemn!" said Bart; "of course you do; so say we all of us. Why shouldn't we?"

"I feel," said Captain Corbet, "a kind of pinin feelin — a longin and a hankerin after the babby."

"O, well, all right," said Bart; "never mind the baby just now."

"But I feel," said Captain Corbet, in a voice of exceeding mournfulness — "I feel as though I'd orter jine the infant."

"O, never mind your feelings," said Bart. "Have you got your mineral rod?"

"I hev."

"Very well; try it."

"I'd rayther not. I — I — Couldn't we postpone this here? It's so solemn!"

"Postpone it! Why, man, what are you thinking of? Postpone it! Nonsense! Think of your baby. Postpone it! And you pretend to be a father!"

Captain Corbet drew a long sigh.

"I feel," said he, "rayther uncomfortable here;" and he pressed his hand against his manly bosom.

"Never mind," said Bart. "Come; try the mineral rod."

Captain Corbet took the rod, and tried to balance it on his finger; but his hand trembled so that it at once fell to the ground.

The boys gave a cry of delight. He had been standing, as before, in the middle of the cellar, and the rod fell in the former place.

"Not a bit of doubt about it!" cried Phil. "There it goes again! Come, let's go to work, boys."

"But we must have some ceremonies," said Bart. "It would never do to begin to dig without something."

"So I say," remarked Captain Corbet, feebly.

Meanwhile Solomon had been standing in his robes, a little apart, looking nervously around.

"Hallo, Solomon!" cried Bart.

Solomon gave a start.

"Ya — ya — yas, sr."

"You're not watching the lights."

"Ya — yasr."

"That basket has fallen."

"Ya, yasr," said Solomon, whose teeth seemed to be chattering, and who seemed quite out of his senses.

Bart walked up to him, and saw at a glance how it was.

"Why, old Solomon," said he, gently, "you're not frightened — are you? It's only our nonsense. Come, Grand Panjandrum, don't take it in earnest. It's all humbug, you know," he added, dropping his voice. "Between you and me, we none of us take it in earnest. Come, you keep the lamps burning, and be the Grand Panjandrum."

At this a little of Solomon's confidence was restored. He ventured to the edge of the cellar, and lifted up the basket in time to save it from

burning up ; but scarce had he done this than he retreated ; the gloom, the darkness, the magic ceremonies, were too awful.

“ Come,” said Tom, “ let’s begin the ceremonies.”

Captain Corbet gave another sigh.

“ I feel dreadful anxious,” said he, “ about the infant ; I’m afeard somethins happened ; I feel as if I’d orter be to hum.”

“ All right, captain,” said Bart ; “ we’ll all be home before long, and with the *pot of gold* ; you know. Come, cheer up, for the ceremonies are going to begin.”

“ See here, now,” said Captain Corbet. “ This here’s a solemn occasion. I feel solemn. It’s awful dark. We don’t know what’s buried here, or what will happen ; so let’s don’t have any heathen ceremonies.”

“ O, the ceremonies are not heathen,” said Bart. “ Each of us is going to make an incantation in the most solemn language that we can think of ; so, boys, begin.”

“ The most solemn thing that I can think of,” said Phil, “ is English history ; so here goes.” And stretching forth his hand solemnly, he said, in a whining voice, like a boy reciting a lesson : —

“ Britain was very little known to the rest of the world before the time of the Romans. The coasts opposite Gaul were frequented by merchants, who traded thither for such commodities as the natives were able to produce.”

“The most solemn thing, to me,” said Tom, “is Euclid.” And then he added in the same tone,

“The square described on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares described on the other two sides of the same.”

“And I,” said Arthur, “find Arnold’s Latin Exercises the worst. The most solemn thing for an invocation is, —

“In temporibus Ciceronis Galli retinuerunt barbaram consuetudinem excercendæ virtutis omni occasione. Balbus ædificabat murum!”

“I,” said Bruce, “have something far more solemn.” And stretching out his hand, he said, in a loud, firm voice, —

“Dignus, indignus, contentus, præditus, captus, and fretus, also natus, satus, ortus, editus, and the like, govern the — hem — nominative — no — the vocative — no — the ablative — all the same.”

“For my part,” said Bart, “the most solemn thing, to me, is Cæsar. The way they teach it here makes it a concentration of all the worst horrors of the Grammar, and Arnold, and History, with the additional horrors of an exact translation. O, brethren of the ‘B. O. W. C.,’ won’t you join with me in saying, —

“Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgæ, aliam Aquitani, tertiam, qui ipsorum lingua Celtæ, nostra Galli appellantur. Hi omnes lingua, institutis, legibus, inter se differunt. Gallos ab Aquitanis Garumna.”

"Here!" cried Captain Corbet, suddenly interrupting Bart; "I can't stand this any longer. It's downright heathenism — all that outlandish heathen stuff! Do ye mean to temp fate? Bewar, young sirs! It's dangerous! 'Tain't safe to stand here, at midnight, over a Frenchman's bones, and jabber French at him."

"French?" said Bart. "It's not French."

"That ain't the pint," said Captain Corbet, who had worked himself up into considerable excitement. "The pint is, air it English? No, *sir*. Does any Christian onderstand sich? No, *sir*. We hain't got no business with sich."

"But it's Latin," said Bart.

"Wuss and wuss," said Captain Corbet. "I take my stand by the patriarchs, the prophets, and the postles. Did they jabber Latin? No, *sir*. They were satisfied with good honest English. It was a solemn time with them thar. English did for them. So, on this solemn occasion, let us talk English, or forever after hold our peaces."

"Well, what shall we do?" asked Bart.

"Do?" said Captain Corbet; "why, do somethin solemn. I should like —" he added, mildly. "Ef you could, it would be kind o' sewthin ef you could sing a hime."

"A hymn," said Bart; "certainly." Now, Bart had a quick talent for making up jingling rhymes; so he immediately improvised the following, which he gave out, two lines at a time, to be sung by the

“B. O. W. C.” It was sung to the mournful, the solemn, the venerable, and the very appropriate tune, known as “Rousseau’s Dream.”

“Why did we deprive the Frenchman
Of his lands against his will,
Take possession of his marshes,
Raise a school-house on the hill?

“’Twas a foolish self-deceiving
By such tricks to hope for gain;
All that ever comes by thieving
Turns to sorrow, care, and pain.

“Ours is now the retribution;
See the fate that falls on us —
Awful tasks in Greek and Latin,
Algebra, and Calculus!

“Yet for all the tribulation
Which the morrow must behold,
We may find alleviation
In the Frenchman’s *pot of gold!*”

The wailing notes of the tune rose up into the dark night, and the tones, as they were dolefully droned out by the “B. O. W. C.,” died away in the dim forest around.

Captain Corbet gave a long sigh as they ended.

“Solemn and solemn!” he slowly ejaculated.

“I wish the biz was over.”

“Well,” said Bart, “the way to have it over is to begin as soon as possible. But remember this, all of you: after the first stroke of spade or pickaxe,

not a word must be spoken — not a word — not one ; no matter what may happen ; no matter how surprised, astonished, terrified, horrified, mystified, or scarified we may be. Mum's the word ; any other word will break the spell ; and then, where are we ? And you, Solomon, mind the lights ! Don't you dare to let one of them go out : as you value your life, keep them going. Above all, mind that tin kettle in the corner ; the wick is bad, and it's flaring away at a tremendous rate. And don't let the baskets upset. Have you got your matches ?”

“ Ya — yasr,” said Solomon, whose teeth were now chattering again, and who looked with utter horror at the row of lights which he was ordered to watch.

“ Will you take the pickaxe, captain ? ”

“ Wal,” said Captain Corbet, in a faint voice, “ I hardly know ; perhaps you'd better dig, an I'll go over to the fence, and see that no one comes.”

“ Go over to the fence ! ” cried Bart. “ What ! go out through that row of lights ? and after our incantations ? Why, Captain Corbet ! Don't you think of anything of the kind. We are seven. It's a mystic number. You must stay with us.”

Captain Corbet heaved a sigh.

“ Wal,” said he, “ I'll take one of the spades.”

“ I'll take the pickaxe,” said Bruce.

“ Very well,” said Bart ; “ you begin. Stir up the earth, and we'll all dig. But after the first stroke, remember — not one word ! ”

Bruce then seized the pickaxe with nervous energy, and raising it, he hurled it into the ground. As it struck, Solomon shuddered, and clasped his hands. Captain Corbet stepped back, and looked wildly around. Again and again Bruce wielded the pickaxe, dashing it into the earth with powerful blows, and then wrenching it so as to pry up the sods. The others looked on in silence. At length he had loosened the earth all about, and to a considerable depth. After this he stood back, and the other boys went to work with their spades. Bruce waited for a little time, and then, dropping the pickaxe, he seized a spade, and plunged it into the ground, and rapidly threw up the soil, doing as much work as any two of the others.

For some time they worked thus. The silence was profound, being only broken by the clash of the spades against the stones, and the hard breathing of the boys. At last they had dug up all the earth that had been loosened by Bruce, and the hard soil began to present an insuperable barrier to the progress of the spades. Seeing this, Bruce seized the pickaxe once more, and again hurled it with vigorous blows into the ground, loosening the earth all around. At last, as he flung it down with all his force, it struck against something which gave so peculiar a sound that the boys all started, and caught one another's arms, and looked at one another in the dim moonlight, each trying to see the face of the other. Bruce stopped for an instant,

and then, swinging the pickaxe again over his head, he dashed it down with all his force. Again it struck that hard substance under ground, and again there was that peculiar sound. It was a sound that could not be mistaken. It was not such a sound as would be given by a stone, or by a stick of timber; it was something very different. It was hard, ringing,—metallic! And as that sound struck upon the ears of the “B. O. W. C.” there was but one thought, a thought which came simultaneously to the minds of all—the thought that Bruce’s pickaxe had reached the buried treasure. But the pot of gold now became to their imaginations an iron chest filled with coin, and it was against this iron chest that the pickaxe had struck, and it was this iron chest which had given forth the sound.

Yet so schooled were they, so determined upon success, that even the immensity of such a sensation could not make them forget their self-imposed silence. Not one word was spoken. They felt, they thought, but they did not speak.

Suddenly Bruce flung down the pickaxe, and seized his spade. At once all the others rushed forward to join in the task. Bruce was first; his spade was plunged deep into the loosened earth. Right and left it was flung. The spades of the others were plunged in also. All of them were digging wildly and furiously, and panting heavily with their exertion and their excitement. Each

one had felt his spade strike and grate against that hard metallic substance which the pickaxe had struck, and which they now fully believed to be the pot of gold. Each one was in the full swing of eager expectation, when suddenly there came an awful interruption.

They might have been digging five minutes, or an hour; they could never tell exactly. Afterwards, when they talked it over, and compared one another's impressions, they could not come to any decision, for all idea of time had been lost. Engaged in their work, they took no note of minutes or hours. But while they were working Captain Corbet had stood aloof; he held a spade in his listless hands, but he did not use it. He was looking on nervously, and with a pale face, and his thoughts were such as cannot be described. Solomon also stood, with trembling frame and chattering teeth, a prey to superstitious terror. To Solomon had been committed the care of the lights; yet he did not dare to venture near them. For that matter, he did not dare even look at them. His gaze was fixed on the boys, while at times his eyes would roll fearfully over the dark outline of those dim and sombre woods whose shadows lowered gloomily before him.

Such, then, was the situation,—the boys busy and excited; Captain Corbet nervous, and idle, and fearful; Solomon trembling from head to foot, and overcome with a thousand wild and supersti-

tious fancies,—when suddenly, close beside them, outside of the row of lights, just as their spades struck the metallic substance before mentioned,—suddenly, instantaneously, and without the slightest warning, there arose a sharp, a fearful, a terrible uproar; something midway between a shriek and a peal of thunder; a roar, in fact, so hideous, so wild, so unparalleled in its horrid accompaniments, that it shook the boldest heart in that small but bold company. It rose on high; it seemed to fill all the air; and its awful echoes prolonged themselves afar through the darkness of the midnight scene.

The boys started back from the hole; their spades dropped from their hands. They saw about half of the lights extinguished, and amid the gloom they could perceive two figures rushing in mad haste away from the spot. A panic seized upon them. Before a panic the stoutest heart is as weak as water. Even the “B. O. W. C.” yielded to its influence. They shrank back, they retreated, they passed the line of flickering lights.

They fled!

Away, away! back from this terrible place, back towards the Academy. So fled the “B. O. W. C.”

First of all the fugitives was Solomon.

He had been nearly frightened out of his wits long before. These proceedings, half in joke, had been no joke to him. In spite of Bart’s assurances

he had stood a trembling spectator, neglectful of his duty. The wind had blown out the lights one by one. Far from lighting them again, he had not even watched them. Every moment his fear had increased, until at last his limbs were almost paralyzed with terror. But at length, when that awful roar had arisen, his stupor was dispelled. An overmastering horror had seized him. He burst through the line of lights; he fled across the field; he ran, with his official robes streaming behind him, towards the Academy. Off went his hat: he heeded it not; he kept on his way. He reached the door of the house; he burst in. Up the stairs, and up another flight, and up another flight, and yet another — so he ran, until at last he reached his room. Arriving here, he banged to the door, and moved his bedstead against it, and heaped upon the bedstead his trunk, his chairs, his table, his looking-glass, his boots, his washstand, and every movable in the room. Then tearing off the bedclothes, he rolled himself up in them, and crouching down in a corner of the room, he lay there sleepless and trembling till daybreak.

Nor was Solomon the only fugitive. Scarcely had he bounded away in his headlong flight before Captain Corbet, with a cry of "O, my babby!" plunged after him, through the line of lights into the gloom that surrounded the ill-omened spot.

And there, over that track which saw the college

gown of Solomon and the coat tails of Captain Corbet streaming in the wind, there, fast and far, in wild confusion, in headlong panic, fled the "B. O. W. C." Who ran first, and who came last, matters not. I certainly will never tell. Enough is it for me to say that they RAN! Such is the power of Panic.

Great, however, as was that panic, it did not last long; and by the time they reached the edge of the playground on the crest of the hill, they all slackened their pace and stopped by mutual consent. There they stood in silence for some time, looking back at the place from which they had fled, and where now a few lights were still flickering.

And there was one great question in all their minds.

WHAT WAS IT?

But this none of them could tell, and so they all kept silent.

That silence was at last broken by Bart.

"Well, boys," said he, "what are we going to do now? Our shovels and lights are there; and, worst of all, our palladium—the bust. Solomon has gone, and Captain Corbet; but we still remain. We've rallied; and now what shall we do? Shall we retreat, or go back again to the hole?"

Bart spoke, and silence followed. Overhead the clouds swept wrathfully before the face of the moon, and all around rose the dim forest shades.

In front flickered and twinkled the feeble, fitful lights. And there, by those lights, was *THAT*, whatever it was, from which they had fled.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, at any rate," said Bruce, in a harsh, constrained voice; "*I'll go back to that hole, if I die for it.*"

"You!" cried Bart.

"Yes," said Bruce, standing with his fists close clinched, and his brow darkly frowning; "yes, I; you fellows may come or stay, just as you like."

A man's courage must be measured from his own idea of danger. A couple of hundred years ago many acts were brave which to-day are commonplace. To defy the superstitions of the age may be a sign of transcendent courage. Now, of all these boys Bruce was by far the most superstitious; yet he was the first who offered to go back to face *That* from which they had all fled. It was an effort of pure pluck. It was a grand recoil from the superstitious timidity of his weaker self. Buoyed up by his lofty pride and sense of shame, he crushed down the fear that rose within him, and his very superstition made his act all the more courageous. And as he spoke those last words, before the others had time to say anything in reply, he turned abruptly, and strode back with firm steps towards the cellar. So he stalked off, steeling his shaking nerves and rousing up the resources of his lofty nature. By that victory over the flesh he grew calm, and walked steadily

back into the dark, ready to encounter any danger that might be lingering there—an example of splendid courage and conquest over fear.

But he did not long walk alone. Before he had taken a dozen steps the others were with him, and in a short time they were all in the hole again. Bart proceeded to light the extinguished candles, while Bruce quietly picked up the spades, assisted by the other boys. Soon all the lights were burning, and Bart joined the little knot of boys who were standing in the centre of the cellar.

“Well,” said he, coolly, “the old question is before us—What are we to do now? Shall we stay here and dig, or shall we go home and go to bed? For my part, if you wish to dig I’ll dig; but at the same time I think we’d better retire, taking our things with us, and postpone our digging till another time.”

“I won’t say anything about it,” said Bruce. “I’ll do either. One thing, however, I promise not to do; whatever happens, I won’t run again.”

“The fact is,” said Arthur, “there’s no use talking about digging any more to-night. It was all very well while we were in the humor. It was all fun; but the fun has gone; we’ve disgraced ourselves. What *That* was I don’t pretend to know; but it may have been a trick. If so, we’re watched. And I don’t think any of us feel inclined to dig here with some of the other fellows giggling at us from among the trees.”

"It may have been the Gaspereaugians," said Phil.

Suddenly a heavy sigh was heard, not far away.

"Hu-s-s-s-s-h!" said Bart; "what's that?"

"That? One of the cows," said Tom.

"I tell you what it is, boys," said Phil; "some of the fellows have got wind of our plan, and have been playing this trick on us. If so, we'll never hear the end of it."

"I'd rather have our fellows do it than the Gaspereaugians," said Bart, solemnly. "What a pity we didn't think of this before we began! We'd not have been taken so by surprise."

"Well," said Phil, "I believe it was some trick; but how any human beings could contrive to make such an unearthly noise, such a mixture of thunder, and howling, and screeching, I cannot for the life of me imagine."

"Still," said Bruce, "it may *not* have been a trick. It may have been something which ought to make us afraid."

"I believe," said Tom, "that we'll find out all about it yet. Let us only keep dark, say nothing, and keep our eyes and ears open. We'll find it out some time."

"Well," said Arthur, "I suppose we're all out of the humor for digging. If so, suppose we smooth over this hole; and then we can take away our lights and spades. My only idea in coming back

was to get the things and destroy all traces of our digging."

"All right," said Bruce, seizing a spade.

The other boys did the same, and soon the hole was filled up. They placed the sods over it as neatly as they could, and though the soil bore marks of disturbance, yet they were not conspicuous enough to excite particular attention.

Then they proceeded to gather up the things so as to carry them away. In the midst of this there came a voice out of the darkness, a long, loud, shrill voice,—a voice of painful, eager, anxious inquiry.

“B-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-ys ! O, b-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-ys !”

“It’s Captain Corbet!” cried Bart. “Hallo-o-o-o-o!” he shouted. “All ri-i-i-i-i-ght! We-e-e’re h-e-e-e-re! All sa-a-a-a-a-afe! Come alo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-ng!”

He stopped shouting then, and they all listened attentively. Soon they heard footsteps approaching, and before long they saw emerging from the gloom the familiar form and the reverend features of Captain Corbet. He came down into the hole, and after giving a furtive look all around, he said, —

“So you’ve ben a toughin of it out, hev you?
Wal, wal, wal!”

“No, captain,” said Bart; “we all ran as fast as we could.”

“ You did ! ” cried Captain Corbet, while a gleam of joy illuminated his venerable face. “ You ran ! What actilly ? Not railly ? ”

“Yes, we all ran; and stopped at the edge of the hill, and then, seeing nothing, we came back to get the things.”

“Wal,” said Captain Corbet, “that’s more’n I’d hev done. I’m terewly rejiced to find that you clar’d out, sence it makes me not so ’shamed o’ myself; but I wonder at your comin back, I do raily. It was a vice,” he continued, solemnly, “a vice o’ warnin. Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound! But it’s all right now. Sence you’ve ben an stopped up the hole, I ain’t afeard any more. But, boys,”—and he regarded them with a face full of awe,—“boys, let that vice be a warnin. Don’t you ever go a diggin any more for a pot of gold. I give up that thar biz now, and forevermore. See here, and bar witness, all.”

Saying this Captain Corbet took his mineral rod with both hands, and snapped it across his knee; then, letting the fragments fall on the ground, he put his feet over them.

“Thar, that’s done! I got that thar rod from a demon in human form,” he said. “It was old Zeke; I bought it from him. He showed me how to use it. It was not myself, boys. Old Corbet don’t want money; it was the babby. That pereshus infant demanded my parential care. I wanted to heap up wealth for his sake. But it’s all over. That vice has been a warnin. While diggin here, I pined arter the babby; an when that vice come, a soundin like thunder in my ears, I

fe-led. I cut like lightnin across the fields, an got to my own hum. But when I got thar I thought o' youns. I couldn't go in to see my babby, and leave you here in danger. So I come back; an here we air again, all safe, at last. An the infant's safe to hum; an the rod's broke forevermore; an my dreams of gold hev ben therrown like dumb idols to the moulds and tew the bats,—to delude me no more forever. That's so; an thar you hev it; an I remain yours till death shall us part."

After some further conversation, the money-diggers gathered up all their pots, and kettles, and pans, and spades, and pickaxes, and shovels, and hoes, and candles, and lanterns, and finally the Bust. These they bore away, and bidding an affectionate adieu to Captain Corbet, they went to the Academy, and succeeded in reaching their rooms unobserved.

And during all the time that they lingered in the cellar there was no repetition of that sound, nor was there any interruption whatever.

IV.

The Wonders of the upper Air.—Mr. Long calls upon the Boys for Help.—All Hands at hard Labor.—Captain Corbet on a Fence.—The Antelope comes to Grief.—Captain Corbet in the Grasp of the Law. Mr. Long to the Rescue.

HE next morning came. It was a glorious sunrise. Nowhere out of Italy, I think, can be seen such sunrises and sunsets as those of Grand Pré. And you may see all that can be presented by even Italy in every part of its varied outline — on the plain, on the mountain-top, or by the sea-side; you may traverse the Apennines, or wander by the Mediterranean shore, or look over the waste Campagna, and yet never find anything that can surpass those atmospheric effects which may be witnessed along the shores that surround the Basin of Minas. Here may be found that which would fill the soul of the poet or artist — the dreamy haze, the soft and voluptuous calm, the glory of the sunlit sky, the terror of the storm, the majesty of giant cloud masses piled up

confusedly, the rainbow tints cast by the rising or setting sun over innumerable clouds.

The sun now arose from out a congregated mass of clouds, and threw a dull red glow over all the east. Above the wide plains of Grand Pré there hung dense exhalations which had risen through the night from the dike lands, and were now waiting to be dissipated. The valley of Cornwallis lay slumbrous and dreamy in a thin haze which rose above it, and in the distance the black outline of the North Mountain peered obscurely. The broad bosom of the Basin of Minas had a peculiar tinge, for, seen through the land mist and the distant haze, it was perfectly calm and unruffled, and the hue of its surface seemed milk-white; and this milk-white flood lay embosomed amid shores of gray, which deepened as they came nearer into black. And here at this time, as always, the centre of the scene, as much the controller of the Basin of Minas as Vesuvius is the monarch of the Bay of Naples,—black, frowning, indistinct,—Blomidon rose, and seemed to gather to himself the intensest shades of darkness. The fog from the Bay of Fundy projected itself through the Strait of Minas far into the Basin, while over the crest of the giant cliff, piled up in vast confused masses, heap over heap, like the mountains reared by the fabled Titans, there arose a tremendous accumulation of clouds.

At first all the east was red; and over the land

mist, and over the hazy valley, and over the milk-white sea, there came a dull glow, which made the scene resemble some place that is illumined by the glare of some vast conflagration. But the moments passed, and the sun climbed higher, and the dull glow of the red changed to a more vivid hue. The glare of that rising sun, still red, yet vivid, and penetrating, and more and more luminous as it rose above the clouds, flung itself over all the scene. The long clouds that stretched over the east spread across the sky like bars of ruddy gold. A flame seemed to light up all the land mists that rolled over the dikes of Grand Pré. A luminous haze hung like a mantle of glory over Cornwallis. The milk-white sea grew all tinged with a brilliant pink, and the distant shores, once dark gray deepening into black, now became purple. The form of Blomidon changed from its ebon hue to a deep indigo, while the haze over its crest had the tinge of flame. Far overhead, as they rose piled up into the sky, the clouds caught the lustre of that sunrise. They shimmered and quivered, as, blown by the wind, they rolled along, receiving every moment in a new direction the rays of the sun; they grew from pale pink to ruddiness, and from ruddiness to vermilion, and from vermilion to the dazzle of a golden lustre, till there arose before the view a heaped-up mass, presenting the reality of all that has ever been imagined of the splendors of Cloud-land; an aerial scene, where

deep down there lay a dull red foundation, on which arose a cloud-built pyramid of pink, of vermillion, and of gold.

But all these passed. These effects were only momentary. In an instant each shifting scene had vanished, leaving only the remembrance of its glory. The sun climbed higher, the land mists grew gray, the haze faded out, the sea surface became blue, Blomidon changed to dark olive, the clouds above lost all their splendor in a leaden color, and at last, as the sun attained a greater height, it shone from a blue sky upon a blue sea, with its circle of green shores, from which fog, and mist, and cloud were all rapidly hurrying away.

The "B. O. W. C." joined the company at the breakfast table that morning with visible signs of weariness and exhaustion. They had been up too late; they had worked too hard, at an unaccustomed labor; and they had been subject to a very strong excitement. They said nothing, however, and none of their schoolmates noticed anything peculiar about them. They were very anxious to learn whether any of the boys had been concerned in the trick which they believed had been played upon them; but the perfect unconsciousness as to the events of the past night which was evinced by all their companions showed most plainly that they, at least, could have had nothing whatever to do with it. In order to make assurance doubly

sure, they talked separately and individually with each of them, so as to see if there were any lurking signs of an acquaintance with their midnight adventure. But the result of this examination confirmed the opinion which they had formed before, and they all concluded that if there had been a trick, none of the boys of the school had anything to do with it. One conclusion only remained—it must be the Gaspereaugians :

Nine o'clock was the hour for assembling in the class-room; but before that hour Mr. Long appeared in the yard of the Academy, where most of the boys were gathered, and collected together all those who had gone with him on the late expedition. There was evidently something on his mind. The small boys could see this, and they all joined the throng, till at length every boy in the place had assembled there.

Mr. Long's business was soon explained. It was about that stone wall which he had caused to be appropriated to furnish ballast for the Antelope. He had heard that the owner of the wall had been vowing vengeance during their absence, and was extremely anxious to have it all replaced. But the trouble was, he could not get any laborers. All the farmers about were hard at work in their fields, and all the seafaring men had gone to Boston with potatoes. He was therefore in a very awkward position. So he had taken counsel with Dr. Porter, and with his consent determined to get

the assistance of the boys. They had put the stones in very easily, and it seemed equally easy for them to take them all out again and replace them. Of course some reward would be needed as a stimulus. In putting them in they had been stimulated by the hope of going on the expedition. Something equally attractive would be needed as an inducement for them to take them out. So Mr. Long and Dr. Porter had thought of something which would supply this required inducement, and the former now appeared to make known the result to the boys.

It was this. He invited all the boys to come and help him in this work of unloading the ballast and replacing the stone wall, and promised them, as a reward, the continuation of their holidays for the remainder of the week.

At this there was but one response. It came in the shape of a wild hurrah. Unload the vessel? Yes, and a dozen vessels. Holidays? more holidays? What wouldn't they do to get them? How lucky it was that all the farm laborers were hard at work, and all the sailors were off to Boston! What a valuable and interesting plant was the potato, which had thus thrown in their way the chance to earn holidays for themselves! So hurrah, boys! and hurrah again! Stone walls? Build them? Why, we'll build a dozen to get more holidays!

So they thought, and so they talked, and so they shouted, and thus convinced Mr. Long of the suc-

cess of his experiment. Not only all of the late voyageurs accompanied him to the Antelope, but all the small boys also, every one of them; in fact, the whole school went down, every one eager to do something, so as to earn his holiday. It was not labor — it was a frolic. It was fun for them; and it was singular to see the effect which this proposal produced upon the “B. O. W. C.” Before this they had been wearied, exhausted, fagged out, in fact, used up, by their laborious exertions and the tremendous excitement of the past night, together with the loss of their usual sleep. But now, at the prospect of more holidays, they roused themselves; all their energies were at once excited; they forgot in a moment all their past exertions, with the sleeplessness that had resulted, and felt as much vigor as though they had slept for ten hours, instead of five.

Down they all went, therefore, to where the Antelope lay; and the procession, although not quite so grotesque as on a former occasion, was still sufficiently striking to attract considerable attention from the villagers. First of all went Mr. Long, alone; for Mr. Simmons did not feel inclined to go. He was busy preparing his lessons for the boys. After the leader followed the elder boys, who had been on the expedition; then came a confused crowd of small boys. They didn't walk in military order exactly; in fact, they had no order at all, and if it must be confessed, they were some-

what disorderly ; at any rate, they beguiled that march by playing at leap-frog, or riding on one another's backs, or doing something else equally striking to the village mind, all the way down.

At last they arrived at the scene of action. Mr. Long put Bruce and Jiggins, who were the largest boys in the school, into the hold of the schooner, to lift out the stones, and then ranged a double line of boys, of all sizes, between the schooner and the place where the stone wall had formerly been.

He then took Arthur, Billymack, Pat, and Bart as his assistants, and stood by the wall to build it up again with the stones from the Antelope. He himself worked with his own hands in building up the wall, and directed his assistants. There were a great many stones ; but, then, there were a great many hands at work ; and so, at last, after violent labor, which, however, was all the time cheered and alleviated by the prospect of additional holidays, the work was completed. Once more the stone wall arose, quite as good as it had been before, and, in fact, even better, on the spot whence it had been taken ; and so vigorously had the nimble hands worked, and so skilfully had Mr. Long and his assistants piled up the stones, that they were able to go back to the hills to take their dinner, with the happy consciousness, — first, that they had earned holidays for the remainder of the week ; and secondly, that the stone wall was a far better one, as they had built it, than it had been

when it was taken away. So Mr. Long said, as he expressed his thanks for their labors, and his deep gratification at the fair result; and so they all felt as they looked at that wall, which, though built by the hands of amateurs, was still far better in every respect than the older portions, the work of other hands, that stood beside it.

For the remainder of the day the boys were all too wearied to engage in any play. The "B. O. W. C.," in particular, were exhausted from their double toil. They spent the afternoon together in Bart's room, talking over the events of that memorable evening when they had dug for money. Solomon, since then, had kept out of sight. They themselves did not feel at all inclined to reproach him. Their thoughts did not refer at all to him, nor to Captain Corbet, but rather to that unearthly noise which had driven them to a disgraceful flight. Most of them thought that it was a trick of the Gaspereaugians. Bruce alone rejected this theory, and plainly stated his belief that it was something supernatural. If it had been the Gaspereaugians, he argued, would they have left us unmolested after we went back? No. It was because we did not dig that we were let alone. If we had begun to dig again, and if we had struck that metallic box again, then we should have heard that roar, and something a good deal worse.

But this was only Bruce's opinion; none of the

others held it. They were convinced that it was the trick of the Gaspereaugians, and were eager to find out some way of retaliating on their enemies; but they could not imagine any way in which to do it.

The hours of the day passed on, and late in the afternoon they went out for a walk. Not having any particular route in view, they strolled down through the village, and very naturally directed their steps towards Mud Creek, so as to take another look at the Antelope, and particularly at that stone fence which had cost them so much labor, and blistered all the hands in the school.

On reaching the spot a startling sight met their eyes. There, perched upon the very stone wall which they had assisted to build, with his arms folded round his knees, and his chin pressed upon the same, with his whole figure drawn up into the smallest compass into which it is possible for the human frame to gather itself, they saw a familiar shape, the sight of which, as they saw it in such an attitude, startled them extremely.

It was no other than Captain Corbet. Drawn up thus, folding thus his knees with his arms, leaning thus his chin upon his knees, he came before their startled vision; but he himself was quite unconscious of their presence. His face was turned to the scene which presented itself before him, and his eyes were fixed upon that scene to the exclusion of all other things; and they, as

they came up behind him, saw gradually what that scene was.

Since they had been there last, the tide had reached its height, and had fallen. Mud Creek now lay before them perfectly empty of water, and presenting to their view an expanse of nothing else except soft, slimy, slippery, oleaginous mud, which now spread away in an impassable gulf, and showed the justice and the truth of that uneuphonious name. But the vast abyss of soft, slimy, and oleaginous mud, and the wide impassable valley composed thereof, and the rise and the fall of these extraordinary tides, were not the attractions which riveted the gaze of Captain Corbet, and the eyes of the boys of the "B. O. W. C.," as they drew nearer. It was something far different — something, in fact, which touched them all, in common, with a deep feeling of sorrow, — a feeling which was strong enough to make Captain Corbet unconscious of the presence of any except himself, and to make the boys stop short in their advance, and look on in deep but mournful silence.

For there, just before them, and just before the entranced gaze of Captain Corbet, lay the *Antelope*. She was lying on her side, down the steep slope of mud, as though with the falling tide she had rolled over to her ruin and destruction. There she lay, with her side buried deep in the soft mud, her masts pointing downwards; buried there, and so firmly fixed in that burial-place, that the next

rising tide would only seem to complete her hopeless ruin. There she lay, doomed and devoted to destruction,—the dear old Antelope, which had carried them safely through all their late adventures, and around which so many imperishable memories had fastened themselves. To these boys of the “B. O. W. C.,” who thus saw it in the peril of its last agonies, the Antelope was not a common schooner. It had carried them safely through adventures which were never to be forgotten. In it they had cruised over Minas Basin, they had visited the Five Islands, they had landed at Pratt’s Cove; in it they had drifted over the wide seas, they had run ashore, they had encountered perils without number; in it they had known joy and sorrow, plenty and famine, hope and despair; and this was the end—to see the dear old tub upset on the wrong side, and lying buried in Mud Creek before their eyes, awaiting its inevitable fate.

“O, Captain Corbet!” cried Bart, who hurried up first to the figure on the stone wall. “O, Captain Corbet! Can nothing be done to save her?”

Captain Corbet turned his face, and looked mildly, yet calmly upon the boys. His calmness extended itself to them, and they thought that it was the calmness of hope. In a moment their sorrow over the Antelope passed away.

But the words of Captain Corbet did not tend to inspire hope.

He shook his venerable head with deep solemnity.

"No," said he, "nothen ken be done. You see, I hurried home to see the babby, an I didn't fasten her right. She stood one tide all night, but it was on'y by chance. This here tide to-day has done for her. I'd orter hev tied her up proper — but it was all the babby. I clar'd out, tied her loose, an this here's the result. Good by, old Antelope! — *Hic jacet*. There's Lating for ye, boys," he added, mournfully. "You're studyin that at the Academy, an kin onderstand the feelins of the onhappy Corbit."

"Don't talk so, captain," cried Bart. "We'll help you. We got out all the ballast to-day. Come; can't you think of some way to save her? Isn't there any way? We'll help you if you want help. We'll wait here till the next tide, and get her righted."

"No go —" said Captain Corbet.

"You give up too quick," cried Bart, more earnestly than before. "Can't something be done? We'll help you, you know."

Captain Corbet shook his head solemnly; then looking earnestly at the boys, he slowly ejaculated, —

"No go, boys; that there schooner's a gone sucker!"

The tone in which Captain Corbet uttered these words was one of such quiet despair, that none of

the boys had anything to say. They all felt that he knew best. Besides, he was most directly concerned in the loss of the Antelope, and if he gave up, then there was no hope for them. Then also they had offered their services, and Captain Corbet had declined them. What more could they do? Nothing more; that was evident. So they listened in mournful silence to his last words.

"Yes," said Captain Corbet, impressively. She's a gone sucker! An it was o'ny my fault. I'd ort to hev tied her up. But I didn't. Cos why? Cos I hed to hurry off to the babby. It was the infant that called me off from my dooty to the schewner, an this here's the end. Sarves me right. O'ny it's a heavy loss, an I wouldn't mind it if it was my loss. But 'tain't my loss. It's hisn. It's the infant's. And the wust of it is, the loss is totial; for the schewner's a gone sucker!"

"I see how it is," he resumed, as the boys stood round him in respectful silence, full of sympathy for his loss,—"I see how it is. It's the finger of Providence. You see," he continued, with a deeper solemnity, "you see it's intended to show me that I'm to devote myself altogether to the babby. I onst dug for gold—I ben warned off. I traversed the briny deep with potatoes—warned off again. This here's what I call a warnin, an I take it as sich, an henceforth intend to give myself up to the babby. That's about it."

Captain Corbet then relapsed into silence, and

once more fixed his abstracted gaze upon the lost schooner. The boys could do nothing, and full of respectful sympathy, they withdrew in silence, and returned to the hill.

It was almost tea-time, and all the boys were out in front of the Academy. Mr. Long was walking up and down the portico, chatting with Dr. Porter. The "B. O. W. C." were there engaged with the others in the general sport, when suddenly Phil seized Bart's arm, and pointed to the avenue.

"Look," he cried.

Bart looked, and saw the familiar figure of Captain Corbet. He was walking rapidly, straight up towards the portico.

The "B. O. W. C." at once rushed up to him.

"Whar's Mr. Long?" said Captain Corbet, who seemed very much excited.

"Up there," said Bart, pointing to the portico.

Captain Corbet said no more, but hurried on in the direction indicated, and soon ascended the steps of the portico, immediately in front of Mr. Long.

"Mr. Long," said he, in great agitation, "I've got into trouble."

"Ah, captain," said Mr. Long. "How do you do? Trouble? What trouble?"

"Along o' that stone fence."

"The stone fence?" said Mr. Long. "How's that? We put it all back in its place, better than ever."

“Any how,” said Captain Corbet, “they’ve gone an sarved a writ on me.”

“A writ !”

“Yes, sir. Damages done to property by removal of wall. An they’re going to prosecute me ! An me jest lost the schewner. Me, with nothin left but my little farm to leave tew the babby !”

He paused, overcome by his emotion.

“Damages ?” said Mr. Long, who was filled with pity at Captain Corbet’s evident distress. “O, don’t be afraid. They can’t do anything. I’ll take the responsibility. I took the stones, you know. You had nothing to do with it. I’ll guarantee your safety. Don’t trouble yourself. When is the suit to come off ?”

“The day after to-morrow.”

“Very well. Don’t you trouble yourself at all. I’ll see to it. I’ll be there and defend you, and I’m very much mistaken if they will be able to make out a case against you. If they do, I’ll pay the damages.”

A flush came over Captain Corbet’s pale face. It was not merely Mr. Long’s promise to espouse his cause, and see him harmless, but the sympathy of his tone and manner.

He seized Mr. Long’s hand in both of his.

“O, Mr. Long ! Onst I thought you was hard-hearted, but now I see I was mistook ; for a kinder nor pleasanter spoken gentleman never lived. An when my babby can learn tew speak, I’ll teach

him to come down here and belless you! For you've saved me from ruination, and snatched the infant from want and woe. That babby, Mr. Long—"

"O, never mind; its nothing," said Mr. Long, hurriedly. "The day after to-morrow—is it? Well, I'll be prepared. All right. Don't be afraid. I'll see all about it. I'm very busy now, or I'd talk more about it. You come here the day after to-morrow. Mind. Don't forget. Good by."

And saying this Mr. Long dragged Dr. Porter away from the portico, leaving Captain Corbet muttering inarticulate words about his babby.

V.

A most mysterious Sound in a most mysterious Place. — What is it? — General Panic. — The adventurous Explorers. — They are baffled. — Is Pat at the Bottom of it? — Bart takes his Life in his Hand, and goes alone to encounter the Mystery of the Garret.

HE boys had much to talk about that night. These had been eventful times. There was their excitement about the mineral rod, and their memorable experiment in the cellar; there was the unlading of the stones, and the bright prospect of more holidays; there was the sorrow of Corbet over his lost Antelope; and finally there was the prospect of the approaching trial, when Mr. Long would defend the cause of the innocent. Were not these matters sufficiently exciting to keep the boys awake till a late hour? Methinks they were.

Above all, that roar which had startled them at their midnight work never ceased to perplex them. Bruce, who was superstitious, still clung to his belief in its supernatural origin, but the other

boys were one and all convinced that it was a hoax. But who had done it? Did the perpetrators of that hoax belong to the school? or did they belong to the village? or were they Gaspereau-gians? On these points they took sides, and had long arguments, which led to no conclusion in particular, but left them where they were.

One conclusion they did come to, however, and that was to keep their adventure a profound secret, and wait to see if the mystery would not be revealed.

In spite of their fatigue, they were so excited by the recent events, that they all remained in the Rawdons' rooms till quite a late hour. The Academy was still, and everybody seemed to have gone to bed. Bart, Tom, and Phil were about to retire to their own rooms, when suddenly there occurred something which made every one of them start to his feet.

It was a long, wild, shrill cry, somewhere between a howl and a hoot, and it sounded in the attic above. Before they could recover from their first shock it sounded again and again.

Bruce's face grew pale, and the others looked at one another with wide-open eyes.

The Rawdons' rooms were in the third story, and immediately above them was the attic, which ran the whole length of the Academy, all unfinished except a little chamber at this end occupied by Pat. Pat's room was immediately over Bart's;

and as the Academy was divided into separate compartments, each with its own entrance and stairways, it had no connection with this part. Midway in the unfinished attic rose the cupola, supported by a network of vast beams, a favorite place of resort for the boys, on account of the magnificence of the prospect which it commanded. On rainy days the attic formed a fine place for exercise, but at night its vast and gloomy extent served rather to repel visitors. Such was the place through which now sounded that discordant and horrid cry which had so startled the boys.

"There it is again!" said Bruce at last.

"Pooh!" said Bart—"that?—that is nothing to what it was up in the cellar."

"Let's go up and see what it is," said Bruce, who again, as before, mastered the weakness of his superstitious fear by a supreme effort of courage.

"All right," said the others. "Now's our chance."

Bruce and Arthur each took a lamp, and they started off. Scarcely had they passed out into the hall, than another of those shrill cries came, and at the same time they heard three peculiar knocks. They stopped for a moment to listen. As they stopped, the door opposite opened, and Jiggins appeared. He looked pale and disturbed.

"What's all the row, Jiggins?" asked Bart.

"Row?" said Jiggins; "I don't know. I don't

like it at all. It don't somehow sound altogether right. I think you'd better not —"

At this moment Jiggins's voice was drowned by another howl. He started, and looked at the others in silence.

By this time they heard below the noise of doors opening, and shuffling feet. The voices of Bogud and Billymack, and Johnny Blue, and Muckle, were heard calling up to them. They shouted back, after which the others came up to the hall, and they all stood listening at the foot of the stairs. In the midst of this, other footsteps were heard, and Pat made his appearance.

"I ran out," said he, "an I saw lights up here — an I came up. Ye've heard it — haven't ye's?"

"Yes," said Bart; "do you know what it is?"

"Me!" cried Pat; "sure didn't I hear it close by me room? and didn't I run for it?"

"It's mighty queer," said Jiggins.

"I think we'd better go down," said David Digg; "whatever it is, it's something that we ought not to face."

"Nonsense, Bogud!" said Bart; "we're going up."

"Up, is it?" cried Pat; "'deed, then, an ye'd betther not! Ye don't know what it is that's up there."

As he spoke there sounded once more those peculiar knocks.

"Many's the time I heard that," said Pat. "It's a black, bad place."

"Wern't you frightened?" asked Bogud, solemnly.

"Sure it cudn't make any differ whether I wor frightened or not. The likes of me's got to bear thim things."

And now there came another uproar. It was yell after yell, so wild, so harsh, and so discordant, that the former noises were nothing in comparison.

Bogud beat a hasty retreat, and Jiggins backed into his doorway. The other boys fell back a little, but the "B. O. W. C." stood their ground, and Bruce put his foot on the lowest step to ascend to the attic.

"Sure ye'll not be goin up!" said Pat.

"Yes, we will," said Bart. "Come along — all of you."

"It's kilt ye'll be!" wailed Pat — "it's dead intirely ye'll find yerselves when ye come back!"

"Come along, boys," cried Phil, as he hurried up after Bruce. "Come, Pat. It's all humbug."

"Come along," cried Bart; "you needn't pretend to be frightened, Pat; you're only humbugging. It's my belief that you know all about it. Can't I tell by your face whether you're really frightened or not?"

"Me!" cried Pat, with a very queer intonation, that sounded like a mournful wail struggling with wild laughter. "Is it me? O woro-o-o! Isn't it to danger yere goin thin! Don't blame me if I didn't

warrun ye's. Och, but it's a black day intirely! Come along, boys," he said to the others who were left. "Let's go down out of this to the flure below."

These last words were not heard by the "B. O. W. C.," who were by this time in the attic, peering through the gloom, and waiting for a recurrence of the sound.

They listened for a long time, but they heard no noise at all. No shrieks, no knocks whatever were heard. At length they began to go about. They walked first towards that end of the attic where Pat's room was, and the only noise they heard was the heavy footsteps of Pat as he ascended the stairs and entered his room.

"It's my firm belief," said Bart, "that Pat is at the bottom of all this humbug. Of course we won't find anything. There won't be so much as a knock, let alone a howl."

They walked all about, and at last reached the place where the cupola arose. It was built over the main part of the Academy, from which wings extended on either side. This main part was taken up with the Academy hall, which, however, did not rise so high as the floor of the attic, and the consequence was, that there yawned here a dark abyss some fifteen feet in depth, and sixty or eighty feet square. Above rose the stout timbers, crossing one another in all directions, through the midst of which ladders ascended into the cupola. Some loose planks laid across this abyss, from beam to

beam, formed a rather dangerous pathway. This the boys traversed, and crossing to the opposite side, they wandered about the long, dark loft, gazing curiously in all directions. There was no flooring on this side, but only beams, with the laths and plaster of the lower rooms between them. Their search took them over this, but nothing whatever came of it.

They searched the whole attic most thoroughly, but could find nothing.

“Well, boys,” said Bart, “we can’t do anything more. For my part I’m fagged out, and I’m going to bed.”

This proposal met with the approbation of all the others. They were all very tired, very sleepy, and very much disgusted at their failure.

So they went down the steps, and the Rawdons went into their room, and the others turned to go down.

But just at that moment the yells and the hoots sounded out again in a deafening volley — then all was still.

“O, yell away!” cried Bart, angrily; “we’ll find you out some day. Depend upon it, boys, Pat’s at the bottom of it. If he is, let him look out; that’s all. I’ll teach him a lesson that he won’t forget in a hurry. Come, Phil. Come, Tom. Good by, Bruce and Arthur. If you feel inclined for another hunt to-night, you may make it yourselves. I’m going to bed, and I’ll sleep till nine to-

morrow in spite of all the noises that can be scared up."

With these words Bart retired along with Tom and Phil; and he kept his word, for he slept as sound as a top, and did not make his appearance on the next day till long after the other boys were up.

After getting his breakfast from Solomon, he wandered out into the grounds in front of the Academy, where he found nearly all the school gathered, and in a great excitement. The noises had been heard all through the night by most of them, and had excited every varying shade of superstitious terror. Bogud had told them about the attempt of the "B. O. W. C." to find out the mystery, and Tom had been forced to acknowledge their failure. All this, of course, made an immense sensation.

Different theories arose among them, most of them tinged with superstition. All these theories referred to an old legend that the Academy had been built on a spot where some French houses had once stood, and that the cellars were beneath the building. Out of this legend some of the boys created a wild theory, which connected the harmless Acadians with the hideous noises of the past night. Jiggins and Bogud were both inclined to this. Pat was very industrious in going about among the boys with terrific descriptions of what he had heard; and as his room was actually in the attic, and only separated from its gloomy extent by

a thin board partition, his authority was considered sufficient for any belief, however wild. Pat, in fact, was a great man that day, and fairly revelled in the awe-struck faces of the small boys as they questioned him about his experience. These small boys all lived in another building called the Boarding House, which stood near the Academy, but apart from it; and as they listened to Pat's wild stories they congratulated themselves that they were not within hearing of such terrific sounds.

Bart heard all this, he watched the effect which this story had produced, and he saw how Pat was glorifying himself on this occasion.

"I tell you what it is, boys," said he to his friends, as they found themselves together apart from the others. "In all this school there is one, and only one, that knows about this row, and that is Pat. I'm sure of it. If I had a doubt before, it's vanished now. Why, look at him over there, frightening the small boys out of their wits. Well," he continued, after a pause, "very well; just wait a while, and see if I don't pay up Pat for this."

As soon as Bart could do it unobserved, he went up to explore the attic. He spent a long time there, and did not come down till the dinner bell rang. Then after dinner he went up again, and spent the afternoon. His investigation was long and searching; but what he found, and where he found it, and how he found it, and in fact whether he found anything at all or not, he did not tell to a

single soul, no, not even to the "B. O. W. C." As Bart preserved such secrecy, I'm sure I'm not going to divulge it just yet. I will do as Bart did, and keep my own counsel, and wait till the proper time comes for the disclosure.

And any boy who thinks there's going to be a ghost in the garret, or a phantom in the French orchard, had better,—well, he had better keep reading straight on. That's about the best advice I can give him.

VI.

The great, the famous, and the never-to-be-forgotten Trial. — Captain Corbet hauled up before the Bar of Rhadamanthus. — Town and Gown. — Attitude of the gallant Captain. — The sympathizing Townsmen. — Old Zeke and his Rat. — Mr. Long's eloquent Oration, ending in the Apotheosis of Captain Corbet's Baby. (For meaning of above word — Apotheosis — see Dictionary.)

HE day appointed for the hearing of Captain Corbet's case was awaited with an excitement which was almost equal to that which had been created by the affair in the attic. It was to come off at eleven o'clock; but the impatience of the boys was not to be restrained, and long before that time they were all out in front of the Academy, gathered together in groups, and discussing the probabilities of the trial. The wall had been removed, and put into the schooner for ballast, and carried away. It had been kept for more than a week. That was all undeniable. But, then, on the other hand, it had all been replaced, so that it was better than ever. That was equally undeniable. How, then, could the owner prosecute? What damage had been done? In fact, the opinion of the boys

was, that instead of prosecuting, he ought to make the school a present of some kind, — say a couple of barrels of apples, in return for their skill and industry in rebuilding his old rickety, tumble-down stone wall. Besides, he had no business to prosecute Captain Corbet. Mr. Long was the guilty party. Why not prosecute him?

On the whole it was a question full of interest, and as the appointed hour drew near, its advent created greater and greater excitement.

At a quarter before eleven the door of Dr. Porter's house opened, and out came Mr. Long, followed by Captain Corbet, while Mr. Simmons and the doctor brought up the rear.

Their appearance was greeted with three rousing cheers by all the boys; and as their respected teachers walked on towards the village, the entire school followed at their heels, in a very irregular, very disorderly, and very noisy procession.

The place where the trial was to come off was about half way between the Academy and Mud Creek. It was in a small hall which was built for lectures, public gatherings, tea meetings and so forth. It was now turned into a court of law, and the awful Rhadamanthus who presided here was a well-known and very popular villager, who, by some singular freak of fortune, had been made a justice of the peace. His name was Pieter Schwab, and he was of Dutch extraction. He was short, round, fat, had a bald head, double chin, gray and

somewhat fishy eyes, flaxen hair, pudgy hands, thick, wheezy voice; and though born and brought up in the country, he still spoke with that musical and mellifluous Dutch accent which he had inherited from his ancestors.

As the party from the hill entered, they found Mr. Pieter Schwab, justice of the peace, seated in the chair of justice. The prosecutor was there too, with a large number of villagers, who took an intense interest in the case; and when the boys crowded in, the little hall was crammed.

One cause of the prosecution — indeed, the only cause — lay in a certain kind of hostility which existed between the village and the hill. It was a sort of “town and gown” feeling, which was not confined to the village, but spread over the country, and particularly Gaspereaux. It was this feeling which brought the villagers at the present time to the court of Rhadamanthus. Still there was not so much partisanship on this occasion as there would have been if the dispute had been directly between the village and the hill; for Captain Corbet was the one who was prosecuted, and Captain Corbet happened to be a great favorite in the village. The villagers present were therefore very uncertain in their sympathies; they wished the hill to be beaten, but they didn’t want Captain Corbet to suffer. The loss of the *Antelope*, which seemed by this time far gone to destruction, excited additional sympathy; and as his venerable form appeared, a

murmur of friendly feeling went round, and a score of horny hands were stretched out to grasp his.

The suit against Captain Corbet was for the recovery of damages incurred by the illegal, violent, malicious, injurious, felonious, dishonest, malignant, mischievous, wanton, secret, forcible, burglarious, and criminal removal of a portion of the stone wall surrounding the potato field of the prosecutor, whereby the said prosecutor had sustained grievous harm and loss. The prosecutor, in setting forth his grievances, stated that it might have been made a criminal action, but out of kindness to Captain Corbet he had decided to make it a civil one, and merely wished to have the losses which he had suffered made good.

The bill of damages was a very heavy one, amounting to no less a sum than five hundred dollars—an amount which poor Captain Corbet could never have paid, and which was perfectly preposterous. The knowledge of this excited a fresh demonstration of feeling in favor of the venerable defendant; and, at length, even before the trial had fairly begun, there was not a villager present who was not heart and soul in favor of Captain Corbet.

The prosecutor brought forward testimony to prove damages. His sole testimony consisted of one witness, who was known by the name of Old Zeke—a poor worthless character, whose life vibrated between begging and getting drunk. He

swore that on a certain day he happened to be down by the creek, and saw a horse in the field where the fence had been removed.

Mr. Long proceeded to examine this witness. Mr. Long had a singularly keen and acute mind, and the witness was nothing in his hands. Old Zeke in a few minutes became so confused that he could not testify to anything. He said first that the day was Tuesday, then Wednesday, then Thursday, then he wouldn't be sure but that it might be Friday, then Saturday, and at length he wouldn't swear but that it might have been Sunday. Finally, he said that he wouldn't swear to the day at all. After this, he was so pressed by Mr. Long, that he thought that the horse might have been a cow; and then he said he wouldn't swear that it wasn't a sheep, or a goat, or a dog. Finally, Mr. Long asked him on his oath if he would swear that it wasn't a rat, and Old Zeke wouldn't swear that it wasn't a rat.

Old Zeke's total discomfiture, however, was nothing to Mr. Long. It was mere child's play. He longed to close with a worthier antagonist—with the prosecutor himself. The prosecutor swore that cattle had got into his potato field, and had done damage which he had estimated at over five hundred dollars.

Mr. Long now proceeded to grapple with the prosecutor.

Could he prove damages to the extent of five

hundred dollars? He could, ah? And how? Could he prove that any cattle had got in? Had he himself seen any cattle? No. No? Who, then, had seen them? Old Zeke. Old Zeke? Very good.

Would the prosecutor be kind enough to state which of the cattle that Old Zeke had seen had done the damage? Was it Old Zeke's rat!

At this a roar of laughter arose from the spectators, who were now in the highest state of excitement.

And what might have been the value of the potatoes planted there,—or how much would it cost to replant them? Two dollars, or twenty? Over how much ground had Old Zeke's rat gone, and how many potatoes had Old Zeke's rat eaten? Would he swear that Old Zeke's rat wouldn't have eaten the potatoes even if the wall had been standing? Would he swear that it was possible for any one rat, in five or six days, to eat up five hundred dollars' worth of potatoes?

In a short time the prosecutor had got into an awful state of wrath and confusion. But Mr. Long was merciless, and had made up his mind not to spare him. So he rang the changes on Old Zeke's rat and the potatoes till all the assembly were convulsed with laughter, and the prosecutor was purple with fury and bewilderment.

Then Mr. Long changed his tone to one of greater seriousness. Alluding to the prosecutor's

oath, that the damage had amounted to five hundred dollars, he questioned him with merciless severity as to how he had made that estimate.

Had he dug up the potatoes to see if they had been injured?

No.

Had he ploughed up the field and sowed it again?

No.

The field remained, then, as it had been planted?

Yes.

On his oath, did he, or did he not, expect a crop of potatoes?

Yes.

How much was planted?

One acre.

How much would be raised?

About a hundred bushels.

How much would they fetch?

About fifty dollars.

Making allowance for expenses of digging, what would be the value?

About forty dollars.

All these replies were wrung out from the prosecutor only by extreme pressure. He felt that he was in a bad position, and struggled hard against it. His face grew red, and big drops of perspiration rolled down over his forehead.

“Forty dollars!” Mr. Long thundered out. “And yet you swear to five hundred dollars’ damage. You prosecute an aged, a virtuous, and an

estimable fellow-citizen, and you dare to take an oath against him to such a frightful untruth! What is this? Is it malice, or what? But if malice, what is there that could ever have been done against you by one so simple-hearted and so true and honest as Captain Corbet?"

All this produced a tremendous effect, on the spectators, on the prosecutor, and on Rhadamanthus.

But now Mr. Long came down harder than ever upon the unfortunate prosecutor. He declared himself ready to prove that Captain Corbet never took away the stone fence at all.

This was easily done.

First, every one of the boys was summoned to give his simple statement of the facts. The whole truth came out, and it was clearly shown that Captain Corbet must have been in total ignorance of the whole transaction. To the testimony of the boys was added that of Mr. Simmons; and he, with all the rest, alluded in touching terms to the occupation of the captain while the stone wall was disappearing. Stone walls? Captain Corbet? *He* touch them? Why, he was nursing his baby at home all the time!

As the boys came forward, one by one, Captain Corbet looked at them, and listened in eager attention, with a smile of love on his meek and venerable face. As they spoke of his absence from the scene, that smile broadened into one of deeper affection; but finally, as they spoke of his occupa-

tion, of his home, of that morning when they found him there with his baby, it was too much. His heart beat fast, — a flood of tender recollections thronged into his memory, — tears started to his eyes.

But what could he do?

Nothing.

He could only grasp the hands of those who stood nearest, and wring them, and murmur broken words: —

“Yes, sir. That’s so. That’s all gospel truth. It’s jest so. I wasn’t nigh the schewner. It was the babby. Him it was. I was a nussin of him, an a feedin of him, an a singin an a hummin to him. An I knowed nothin more about that thar stone wall than the man in the mune.”

And all these words of Captain Corbet, together with the simple statements of the boys, combined to strengthen the convictions of the villagers that the poor captain was a deeply injured man.

Now, of all these circumstances which tended to establish Captain Corbet’s perfect freedom from all possible blame, Mr. Long was not neglectful of a single one. He gathered them all up in his mind, and after all the witnesses had been examined, prepared to hurl them with tremendous force at the head of the miserable, and now almost panic-stricken, prosecutor.

Mr. Long was a man of magnificent presence — tall, leonine in aspect, and impressive in manner:

he joined to these advantages a wonderful acuteness of thought, and a copious flow of eloquent language. Besides, he was stung by the cowardly act of the prosecutor, who attacked poor Captain Corbet, instead of attacking himself, who was the real culprit, if there were any culprit; and so he determined to read that man a lesson which he would always remember, and prepared to pour out all the full vials of his wrath upon his miserable head. No damage whatever had been done, or could have been done. And yet this man tried to ruin Captain Corbet out of petty spite. That was enough for Mr. Long.

He began by a severe review of the prosecutor's statements, and a still more severe criticism of his charges for damages. Old Zeke's rat was once more brought out for the benefit of the village audience, and light jesting was mingled with scathing denunciation. Old Zeke himself did not escape, and Mr. Long asked his hearers to judge what kind of a cause it was, which had need of such a witness.

Then he showed the enormous difference between the utmost value of the potatoes, even if all were spoiled, and the charge made by the prosecutor. The fact that the prosecutor had sworn to five hundred dollars' damage was enlarged upon in indignant language, which accused that prosecutor of nothing less than perjury.

Then, taking all these facts together, he sought

for a motive, and could find nothing else than extreme avarice or excessive malignity. And against whom? Against Captain Corbet, one of our oldest, most virtuous, most respected, and most venerable citizens; one whose character had never before been impeached; one who was loved and revered by all; who never had a quarrel, who had never made an enemy, and who had never stood in a court of law before until this day.

At this there was an immense sensation. The boys and the villagers mingled together in crowding near to Captain Corbet, in order to show their sympathy with his unmerited woes.

“And who was Captain Corbet,” he asked, at length, “against whom this ruinous charge had been made?” This was a question full of interest, for it led him to consider the character of the defendant. He alluded to his many virtues, his reputation, his popularity; he touched also, in gentle terms, upon his recent loss in the destruction of the Antelope; and by skilfully intermingling the excellences of Captain Corbet with his afflictions, he excited still more the commiseration of his hearers.

Finally, he considered the testimony as to the actual occupation of Captain Corbet while the fence was being taken away.

“He knew nothing whatever about it,” said Mr. Long, — “absolutely nothing. He was not there. He was far away. Where was he? Where was this

man who has been charged with being a trespasser and a thief? Where was this man who has been accused of removing his neighbor's landmarks, and laying waste his neighbor's fields? Where?"

Mr. Long paused for a moment, and his eyes looked all around over the crowd, and finally settled upon the frightened face of the unhappy prosecutor.

"Where was he?" repeated Mr. Long.

Again he paused, perhaps with a slight feeling of regard for the poor prosecutor; perhaps, on the other hand, with a desire to make his speech more effective; perhaps carried away by his own eloquence, and merely seeking the most appropriate language with which to clothe his vehement thoughts; perhaps because he faltered for an instant before he should say what was in his mind to say.

"Where was he?" he repeated once more. "Where? Why, all the time far away from the schooner, from the wharf, and from the stone wall; ignorant of everything that was going on; thinking of far different things — seated in his own house, on his own chair, by his own fireside. Yes, alone; and engaged in what I have heard him call a parent's fondest joy! Not stealing away a stone wall! No! but administering, in the seclusion of his own home, to the necessities of his offspring, — supplying nutriment to his — ah — infant — ah — in fact, — ah — nursing with his own hands — his — ah — his baby!"

Mr. Long stopped abruptly. He saw Captain Corbet making a violent effort to get near to him ; but he avoided him, and the venerable navigator had to pour out his feelings to others who stood nearer.

The end of it all was, that the case was dismissed, and the prosecutor had to pay costs — though that was not much.

And Captain Corbet was for a short time the hero of the village and of the hill. As he came forth they all cheered him with united voices ; and about two hundred, consisting of men and boys, shook hands with him.

And all the boys marched along with him nearly all the way to his home.

And then they went to the hill, and spent the remainder of the day in discussing the famous trial.

And every one of them, from Bruce down to the smallest boy of the primary department, was in a state of frenzy about Captain Corbet and Mr. Long.

VII.

The Valley of the Gaspereaux. — Invading the Enemy's Territory. — Defiance. — Returning Home to find their own Territory invaded. — The Camp. — The missing Ones. — Where are they? — The Gaspereaugians?

HE next night the noises in the attic were renewed. Bart lay calmly slumbering, and remained undisturbed, but all the rest of the boys were very greatly excited. They turned out of their rooms, and talked with one another in the halls, and most of them passed a sleepless night. Tom and Phil, who roomed near Bart, knocked at his door to rouse him. He got up, opened the door, and declared that they had better go back to bed. He assured them that it was a hoax, and that Pat was probably at the bottom of it. For his part he was sleepy, and wouldn't bother himself about it that night at any rate. So Tom and Phil, seeing his indifference, went back to bed, and fell asleep. Bruce and Arthur, however, being close under the attic, were more disturbed; and after trying in vain to sleep, they rose, took a lamp,

and went up into the attic. Jiggins again met them as they came out of their room, at his door, but declined going up. So the two brothers went up together, and looked around for some time without finding anything. While they were up there the noises ceased; but after they had gone down, disgusted with this second failure, the noises were renewed. But familiarity breeds contempt, and Bruce himself had lost his superstitious fear. He was convinced that it was a hoax, and so he felt only irritated at the noise. Having failed to discover the cause, both he and Arthur went to bed, and for the rest of the night, in spite of the noises, they slept soundly.

On the following morning Bruce proposed a walk to Gaspereaux. All acceded to this proposition except Bart. He did not care about going. He had several things, he said, which he wished to attend to. After vain efforts to persuade him to accompany them, an arrangement was finally made that he should meet them at the camp at four o'clock. This Bart acceded to, and promised to bring provisions enough to supply them all with a bounteous and a generous repast.

The school was all alive that morning with excitement. Nothing was talked of, nothing thought of, but the unaccountable noises in the attic. Again, as before, the theories of superstition were put forth. Again, as before, Jiggins and Bogud shook their heads solemnly over the matter, and declared

that there was something serious in it. Again, as before, Pat went around among the boys giving a terrific account of his own experience, and expatiating upon the hardships which he had to undergo in living in a room which was close to that place of horror—the attic. But in spite of his professed fear, Pat did not seem to suffer in bodily health in any way. His appetite was as good, his complexion as ruddy, and his spirits as active as ever; and all the boys, as they heard his terrific experience, wondered how he could stand it so well.

Immediately after breakfast, Bruce and the other boys started off for Gaspereaux, leaving the whole school in this wild state of excitement. Bruce, at the breakfast table, had entered into an argument with Jiggins about the noise in the attic, in which he maintained the theory that it was a hoax by somebody. Jiggins, on the other hand, boldly asserted that the noises were supernatural, and announced his belief that it was done by some wandering Frenchman who had been exiled at the expulsion of the Acadians, and would never be at rest till the school should be given up. Bogud, Billymack, Johnny Blue, Sammy Ram Ram, and Pat supported Jiggins; while Muckle, Bart, Arthur, Tom, and Phil sustained Bruce. The argumentation was tremendous, but, as usual, resulted in nothing, since each was resolved to maintain his own opinion. Of those who thus argued, two only

understood the case: the one was Pat, who said a great deal on his side of the question; the other was Bart, who only made an occasional remark, and created a vague surprise by his general reserve. He was usually outspoken and positive, but now he contented himself with general remarks and indistinct hints. But though Bart said little on this occasion, he kept his eyes open, and observed much. He noticed Pat's demeanor in particular, and marked the eager volubility with which he supported Jiggins's theory. This only strengthened his belief that Pat was, as he said, at the bottom of it, and made him more determined than ever to concoct some plan which should bring Pat to confusion, and force him to a confession.

Such was the state of things, when Bruce, with his friends, started off to Gaspereaux, leaving Bart behind them, with the understanding that he should join them, with provisions, at the camp, at four o'clock in the afternoon. They took fishing-rods with them, and anticipated a day of sport.

The valley of the Gaspereaux lay about a mile behind the Academy, and was one of the most beautiful places in all that beautiful country. The river has its origin in several lakes, which are only a few miles away from the sea; and after flowing from these, between lofty hills and over precipices, where it falls in picturesque cataracts, it winds its way onward towards the Basin of Minas.

On either side arise steep slopes, and through

the narrow valley between these the river winds. It is only a small stream in many places, easily fordable, and the numerous trout at certain seasons make it a favorite resort for the angler. The narrow valley is dotted with trees and groves, the borders of the little stream are lined with willows, the soil is exceedingly fertile, and amid the foliage of trees and the green vegetation the cottages of the farmers and the tapering spires peep forth, with a picturesque beauty which adds new charms to this romantic spot. A road winds down one side of the valley and up the other, and this road crosses the stream by a bridge, which forms a central spot, from which the eye may wander over a landscape, which for soft and quiet loveliness may be equalled by few, and surpassed by none, of those which in other climes have been celebrated by the poet or the artist.

But to venture into this delightful valley was not so safe for the boys of the Grand Pré school as was desirable. To go there was to penetrate into an enemy's country, and to encounter all the dangers of such an enterprise. For the feud which raged between "town and gown" extended over to Gaspereaux, and the boys of this valley were the chief enemies of the school. The winter was the great season for campaigning, and then many were the snow-ball fights which took place between the hostile parties. During the other seasons there was a kind of truce; the Gaspereaugians were

generally busy on their farms, and no pitched battles occurred. Still, at any season, it was not pleasant for any one belonging to the school to find himself alone in Gaspereaux. For this reason they generally went in parties. Sometimes, also, the Gaspereaugians would invade the Academy woods, and commit various depredations, such as breaking the dams, or tearing down the camps. Such was the state of things at this time.

Along the crest of the hill that separates Gaspereaux Valley from Grand Pré there ran a road originally made by the French Acadians, and known as the Ridge Road. A drive along this affords a series of the most magnificent prospects imaginable, and it was a favorite walk for all connected with the school. Bruce and his companions did not descend at once into the valley, but turned up the Ridge Road, and walked along for some distance. At last they descended through the woods into the upper part of the valley, and came to the river. It was quite shallow, and the boys walked up its bed, stepping from stone to stone, and occasionally taking to the bank as they came to some deep spot. They all had brought rods and lines, and at length varied their pursuits by fishing. They found plenty of angle-worms by turning up stones here and there. Phil was most successful, for he succeeded in hooking seven very fine trout. Bruce caught four, Arthur three, and Tom five. At length they grew tired of fishing,

and as they felt hungry they made a fire, and cooked the trout on the coals. They had no salt, but they found the old proverb to be true, that hunger is the best seasoning; and so, being excessively hungry, they all found the broiled trout delicious.

Amusements and occupations like these took up many hours, and so the time passed, till at length they began to think of returning. They decided to go back through the valley, and beard the lion in his den, by facing the Gaspereaugians in their own retreat.

Off they all started then, and taking the road, they walked along down the valley. At every step they expected to encounter the enemy; but, to their surprise, no enemy appeared. The boys whom they saw from time to time were too small to deserve notice. Reaching at last the place where the road wound up the hill and went to Grand Pré, they turned aside, and strolled along to the centre of the village. This was where the bridge crossed the river. It was a beautiful place. An island lay midway, and just above the bridge was another island. Here they staid for some time, and fished; but no fish appeared. What was still more wonderful, no Gaspereaugians appeared, either.

They could not account for it. They felt disappointed. It seemed like a slight. After waiting as long as they could, they had to turn away at

last; and it was with something like indignation that they started back to the Academy.

The rest of the journey was uneventful; but when they reached the camp in the woods, where they expected to meet Bart, a strange and startling sight met their eyes.

The brook ran along through a little dell, and on either side the banks arose. By the camp the bank on one side was steep, and covered with trees; but the other side, a little lower down, was a gentle slope, bare of trees, and green with short, soft grass.

And on this place Bruce and his companions saw a crowd of boys standing, regarding them with hostile faces, and apparently bent on mischief.

They were the Gaspereaugians.

The Gaspereaugians!

Now they understood it all. This, then, was the reason why they had gone through Gaspereaux unmolested. They had not been troubled, for the simple reason that the Gaspereaugians had themselves been off on a foray, and this was their enterprise. They wondered what had become of Bart and Solomon; and as Bruce thought of this, a dark frown came over his face, and he stood looking at the Gaspereaugians like a thunder-cloud.

VIII.

Bart and Solomon fall into an Ambush, and after a desperate Resistance are made Prisoners. — Bonds and Imprisonment. — Bruce and the Gaspereaugians. — A Challenge, a Conflict, and a Victory. — Immense Sensation among the Spectators. — The Prisoners burst their Bonds. — Their Flight. — Recovery of the Spoils of War.

MEANWHILE Bart and Solomon had been having their own little adventure. They had left the Academy at half past three, so as to have everything ready for the boys by four o'clock. For this purpose Solomon carried a basket of provisions, filled with those multiform and very attractive dishes which his rare culinary genius never failed to create whenever a fitting occasion demanded it.

So they ascended the hill, and crossed the old French orchard, and descended into the gully, and went up the other side into the woods, and then walked along the path towards the camp.

Suddenly, as they came to a place where the path turned to the left, there was a loud shout; and in

an instant they were surrounded by some twenty or thirty boys. The boys were rough and wild. They were dressed in homespun. They were strong-limbed, red-cheeked, horny-handed, burly fellows; and they threw themselves violently upon Bart and Solomon.

Bart struggled bravely; but what could he do against so many? In his desperate struggles he managed to knock down one or two of them; but before long he was lying down, first on his back, and then on his face, and his hands were tied behind him. Then he was allowed to get up. He did so, and found himself none the worse for the rough-and-tumble fight which he had been indulging in. A pang, however, came to his generous heart as he saw Solomon with his hands tied; and another pang, also, as he saw two of the Gaspereaugians carrying off the basket with all its precious store of provisions.

But in spite of his situation, Bart did not for a moment lose heart.

"Couldn't you have managed it with less than thirty?" he said, quietly, to the Gaspereaugians. "Wouldn't twenty have done to attack me and old Solomon?"

The Gaspereaugians looked sulky at this.

"Ten, I should say," resumed Bart. "Ten Gaspereaugians ought to be enough for one of us; and if so, why bring thirty? Answer me that. You won't? Very well. All the same."

“Here, young chap,—you dry up!” growled a big Gaspereaugian, who was near him. “Ten of us? I’ll show you that I’m a match fur any ten o’ yours. That wull I jist. So dry up!”

“It’s quite right to keep me tied up,” resumed Bart, cheerily. “I might do you harm, and I only wonder you don’t tie my feet too. You wouldn’t be safe if my hands were loose,—of course. But, my Gaspereaugian friends, why bind the hands of my aged companion? He won’t hurt you. He’s one of your own people. His home is in your own charming valley. You all know old Solomon. I guarantee that he shall not harm one of you. So, my friends, unbind his aged hands.”

“You shut your mouth,” growled the big Gaspereaugian, “or I’ll precious soon make you. I know you,—young f’ler,—no humbug! You’re the chap that blacked my eye with a snowball last winter.”

“Was it you?” said Bart, with a laugh. “That is capital! If I wasn’t tied up, I’d insist on shaking hands with you. And did I black your eye? Ha, ha, ha! I never knew that before. It was a capital shot. I remember, now that you mention it. But look here—you gave me something back. You gave me a snowball that set my nose bleeding for half an hour; and that, I think, was about the only blood that was shed in all our battles.”

Bart spoke with such jolly carelessness, and such good humor, that his fun was contagious, and the

Gaspercaugians burst into a roar of laughter. Even the big fellow who had threatened him joined in the laugh, and a murmur went round among them to the effect that this prisoner wasn't a bad fellow.

"Solomon," said Bart, "Solomon, my sable friend, how do you feel?"

"Tip top," said Solomon, with a grin.

"Solomon?"

"Yes, s'r."

"They're going to tie us up tighter. They're so afraid of us! Do you think you can stand it?"

"Stan it? Yes, s'r. 'Tain't nuffin. All same to an ole niggar like me. I knows ebery one ob dem. I'm Gasperojum myself."

"Fellow-citizens," said Bart, "and gentlemen of the Gaspereaux Valley, I appeal to your chivalry! Is it generous, or noble, or chivalrous, to bind the hands of my aged friend? I'll give my word that he shan't knock down more than a dozen of you, if you let him loose. Come now, aren't there a dozen of you that will be willing to be knocked down for the sake of alleviating the woes of an aged, a virtuous, and an occasionally rheumatic African? Besides, you don't know what he is. He's not a common person. He's a Grand Panjandrum."

"O, you Panjer danger yerself, an see how you like it!" growled the big Gaspereaugian, who felt some slight fear that Bart was making fun of him.

"See here," said Bart; "since you've tied us up,

hadn't you better tie up that basket of provisions, too? If you haven't got any cord, you may take what I have."

This was received with roars of laughter, to which Bart listened with unaltered placidity.

Meanwhile, as Bart had been speaking, he had been trying his fetters, and found them not so tight but that he could work his hands free. His jests about their tying his hands made the Gaspereaugians ashamed to secure them more tightly. Some of them, indeed, were in favor even of untying him. But Bart had been hurriedly bound, and his hands were small, so that to slip them through the bonds was not a work of difficulty. He soon found out this, but kept his own counsel, and held his hands rigidly behind him, as though they were bound too tightly to be moved. As he spoke he looked all around watchfully, so as to see his chances of escape. To slip his hands was easy whenever he chose. Had it been himself alone that was concerned, he would have made a dash into the woods, and could have easily eluded pursuit. But he could not leave Solomon; and so he waited in the hope that some favorable juncture might arrive when he could free his companion also.

The Gaspereaugians now led them away across the brook that ran by the camp and took up their station on the other side, on that smooth, grass-grown slope which has already been mentioned. Bart and Solomon were put inside of a half-finished

hut of spruce, which some of the boys had been building. Through the interstices of the branches they could see the camp of the "B. O. W. C." perfectly well. It was not far away, and the Gaspereaugians were debating whether to go and pull it down now, or to wait until some more boys might come.

In the midst of this debate, Bruce came upon the scene, with his companions; and they, after looking hastily around, had found themselves in the presence of the invading host. There stood Bruce in full view of Bart and Solomon; his brows lowering darkly and menacingly, and a stern interrogation in his face, before which the Gaspereaugians as first seemed to quail.

"What do you want here, you fellows?" said Bruce, at last.

There was no reply for nearly a minute. The eyes of all the Gaspereaugians were fixed upon the speaker, but no one answered.

At this moment, Bart, finding himself unobserved, slipped his hands out of their bonds, and quickly untied those of Solomon.

"Now, Sol," he said, "there's going to be a row. This is our chance. When I start, you follow. But don't start till I do. Mind, now!"

"Yes, s'r," said Solomon, with his usual grin. "I'm yours till def, — slave or free, — live or dead, — sure's a gun, — an ebber faitful!"

And now Bart looked all around, waiting for a chance to start.

The Gaspereaugians had forgotten all about their prisoners. Other things far more exciting presented themselves. There stood Bruce; and once more his lordly and imperious voice rang out, —

“What are you fellows doing here? Away with you all — every one of you!”

Bruce was tall, and broad-shouldered, and stout, and muscular. His hat sat loosely on his head, and his hair clustered in careless curls about his broad forehead. His eyes seemed to flash, and his thin nostrils quivered with disdain. He looked like a statue of Apollo, as he stood there, in the glow of his youthful strength and beauty, and faced down his enemies. Their very numbers, instead of overawing him, only served to rouse to the utmost the whole vigor of his soul, and stirred up his proud, bold spirit to a scornful self-assertion.

A movement now took place among the Gaspereaugians, and murmurs passed through them. At length the big fellow who had been so fierce with Bart went forward from out the crowd of his companions, to the place where Bruce was standing by the pool of the camp. He was a big, hulking, clumsy, low-browed fellow, with a heavy gait and sullen face. He was taller and stouter than Bruce, and evidently considered himself the champion of his party. As he approached, Bruce stood, with folded arms, regarding him, while his lips curled into a smile.

“Well,” he said, in a gay and careless tone, “what can I do for you?”

The big fellow clambered up the dam, and stood in front of Bruce.

"Whar's Bruce Rawdon?" he said, looking round, and pretending not to know that he was there before him. "Whar's this Bruce Rawdon that youns brag on? Put him down here, fur I want to hev a trial with him — I want to wrastle."

"My good fellow," said Bruce, "I'm Bruce Rawdon, and I'm quite at your service. Only you are mistaken if you think that we brag on any one. We're not a bragging camp."

The Gaspereaugian looked at him, and made a ridiculous grimace.

"So this is Bruce Rawdon!" said he — "this here! Wal, Rawdon, let's wrastle. We'll decide who's the best man. On'y take care of your close, my fine feller. I'm generally considered rough. Yes, rough as a bar, — that's what I be."

"All right," said Bruce, quietly, and in a minute he had flung off his hat, coat, and waistcoat.

"I'll keep my duds on," said the Gaspereaugian; "on'y *that* — that's by way of defyin'."

And saying this he flung his hat on the ground.

Upon this the two champions prepared to grapple.

The place where they stood was a grass plot on one side of the pool. The pool was full to the brim. The "B. O. W. C." stood on the dam. The Gaspereaugians stood about twenty paces off. It was a moment of intense excitement.

For a few seconds they stood with extended arms, warily regarding one another. Then Bruce made a plunge forward, and before the other could guard against it, he had caught him around the waist, under his arms.

Bruce had got the "underhold."

The two were now locked in a close embrace, and for a few moments the big Gaspereaugian made tremendous efforts to throw his antagonist. But the efforts were unsuccessful. Bruce did not exert himself much, but quietly evaded the efforts of the other, and still held his adversary in an unrelaxing grasp.

The Gaspereaugians now began to look anxious. Bruce's face was so calm, his action was so quiet, he seemed to make so little effort in spite of the immense exertions of his antagonist, that he appeared to show some vast reserve of strength in store, ready to be put forth at some sudden moment.

The Gaspereaugian was, in truth, a big, burly fellow, whose muscles had been developed by a life of hard labor on a farm; but he was slow, and clumsy, and ignorant of all skill in wrestling. Now, Bruce was an adept in almost every active sport; while his limbs were so admirably knit, and his muscular development was so splendid, that even on the score of brute strength he soon gave evidence that he overmatched the other; at the same time, he made it apparent that his strength was

only half put forth. The Gaspereaugians grew more anxious every moment, while Arthur, Tom, and Phil, who had never for an instant doubted the result, felt their excitement increasing to an unendurable degree.

Bruce soon showed what his idea had been in these manœuvres. He had now worked himself around, so that his back was towards the pool, and the Gaspereaugian had made one violent effort to push him in backwards. It was in vain. Bruce stood like a rock. Then suddenly, as the Gaspereaugian's efforts slackened somewhat, Bruce flung his right arm around him lower down, and by one quick and tremendous effort of strength raised him up into the air. In an instant the fellow's legs spun upward ; he appeared to turn a back summer-set, and then, — down he went, all sprawling, on his back, with his arms and legs extended wildly, straight into the pool !

“ No sound of joy or sorrow
Arose from either bank,
But friends and foes, in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
Stood gazing where he sank.”

Thus far the two prisoners had remained in confinement. They might easily have escaped ; their hands were free, and no one was paying any attention to them, but they remained there. Solomon would not go till Bart led the way ; and Bart was too tremendously excited by the struggle to think

of moving. He stood there rooted to the spot, staring with intense interest. At last the end came, and as Bart saw the Gaspereaugian's legs go tossing up, and saw him fall splashing into the pool, he touched Solomon, and, followed by him, he darted into the thick shrubbery. The basket of provisions stood there neglected; this Bart seized as he passed, and gave it to Solomon. After this they made a circuit to get to the camp.

Meanwhile the discomfited wrestler had scrambled to his feet in the pool of water, and stood for a time up to his waist, sputtering, blowing, and gasping for breath. The boys stood looking on; and Bruce watched him quietly, not knowing whether the struggle would be renewed or not. But the Gaspereaugian did not make any advances towards resuming the conflict. He himself had been foiled so completely in his most desperate efforts, and the tremendous strength of those arms which had raised him in the air and flung him into the pool was so formidable to his imagination, that he was not at all inclined for another trial. The one trial had sufficed. So he slouched off, with his sulky face bent down, and soon joined his crest-fallen companions.

Scarcely had he joined them than a shout was heard near the camp. Bruce and the other boys turned, and, to their delight and surprise, saw Bart and Solomon, with the basket of provisions.

"Hurrah!" cried Arthur; "why, Bart, we were afraid you'd come to grief."

“So we did,” said Bart; “we were captured — we’re escaped prisoners of war.”

“Captured! Prisoners of war!” cried Bruce.

“Yes,” said Bart.

“How?”

“About an hour ago we came up and fell into an ambush.”

“But how did you manage to get away?”

Upon this Bart told them all about it, and his story was received with unbounded delight, and gave rise to no end of fun. What was best was, the fact, not merely that they had escaped, but that they had brought off the basket also in safety.

Suddenly Bart looked at his watch.

“Brethren of the ‘B. O. W. C.,’” said he, “it’s only sixteen minutes after four. Thus, after so many adventures, — after ambushes, fights, and captivities, — we have succeeded in keeping our appointment, and are not more than sixteen minutes behind time.”

Upon this Solomon carried the basket into the camp, and the others followed, and prepared to take their lunch as coolly as if nothing had happened.

This was too much for the Gaspereaugians. It was a bitter mortification for them to witness the defeat of their companion; it was equally aggravating to see their prisoners reach their friends, carrying with them their basket; and all this reached its climax when they saw the quiet preparations for a lunch.

They stood in that state of mind and body which is expressed by the remarkable word — dumb-founded.

But what could they do?

Hostilities did not seem to be very attractive now, for the defeat of their champion had greatly changed the aspect of affairs. To stand there stupidly looking on was also not quite the thing. They had come to indulge in a general triumph over the school—and this was the end! They hesitated for some time, and stood in doubt.

But their indecision was at last ended. Their champion walked off silently and sulkily; and they, seeing the leader go, slowly filed away after him. And so —

Exeunt omnes Gaspereaugienses!

IX.

A Banquet begun, but suddenly interrupted. — The far-off Roar. — Off in Search of it. — Keeping Watch at the old French Orchard. — Another Roar, and another Chase. — Soliloquies of Solomon. — Sudden, amazing, paralyzing, and utterly confounding Discovery. — One deep, dark, dread Mystery stands revealed in a familiar but absurd Form.

HE boys now began a very pleasant repast in their camp. Solomon had, as usual, done justice to the occasion. He had chickens, turkeys, mince pies, and other articles too numerous to mention. The boys had enough to talk about; for Bart had to narrate again the story of his captivity, and Bruce had to give an account of their wanderings through the valley of the Gaspereaux.

The departure of the invading host was viewed by the boys without any demonstrations of excitement whatever. They tried to act as though they were perfectly indifferent to their movements; and having gained the solid results of a victory, they did not care to heighten its brilliancy by any vain

display of triumph. The triumph that was in their hearts was enough. They knew also that the Gaspereaugians would feel an additional mortification when they reached home; for then they would there learn that Bruce and his party had penetrated to the very centre of their territory, and had virtually done defiance by lingering so long by the bridge.

By that memorable exploit the camp in the woods had now become hallowed. Henceforth it was to bear in their eyes the charm of historic associations. They felt that their labor in building it had not been in vain. In truth it was a pleasant spot; and apart from any other associations, its own quiet beauty was sufficient to give it strong attractions. Its walls arose above them, surmounted by its roof, all interwoven with the fragrant, balsamic branches of fir trees. They had chosen fir in preference to others for the reason that the spines of the fir branches will cling for months before drooping; whereas the hemlock, the spruce, the pine, and most other trees of that kind, are of such a nature that their spines will not cling to the severed branch for much more than a week. And here were the dark green walls, cool, and shadowy, and fragrant. Over the floor was a thick, deep carpeting of soft moss, suitable for a seat, or for a couch. Outside, all the scene was shut in by the lofty trees which bordered the little dell. Just behind them the brook bubbled and babbled over

rocks and pebbles, till it fell into the pool. The pool itself, their handiwork, was not the least of the attractions. Its waters were deep enough to bathe in, and made a pleasant contrast to those surrounding trees which it reflected in its mirror-like surface. Farther down, the brook passed on, bordered on one side with trees, and on the other by that grassy knoll where late the beleaguering Gaspereaugians had stood. On it went, past the trees, past the knoll, through underbrush and mosses, until at length it was lost to view in the forest. But amid all these beauties, the one object which was dearest to the "B. O. W. C." was that which they had fixed over the door as at once a memorial of the past and a stimulus to adventurous deeds in the future. It was the jaw of the big fish. They had for a while been undecided as to its destination, and were on the point of giving it to the Museum, but at last decided on placing it there. There it accordingly was, grinning pleasantly with its triangular teeth, and inviting every one to enter.

Thus they were seated at their lunch, with Solomon a little apart, looking at them like a father, engaged in pleasing conversation upon all the topics which their recent varied adventures might suggest, recounting the past, enjoying the present, and speculating on the future, when suddenly there came an interruption, which in a moment put a full stop to everything.

It was a distant sound.

Now a distant sound must have been very peculiar to have caused such excitement as this.

Very well — this was very peculiar.

It was a harsh, dissonant roar, a noise, in fact, that could not be called a roar exactly, but something half way between a roar and a howl, repeating itself over and over, and pealing from afar upon their startled ears in tremendous echoes. There was no mistaking that sound. It was the same as the one that had so startled them on the memorable night of the money-digging, and had sent them flying in confusion from the spot.

The boys all looked at one another with glances of deep meaning. Not one of them was frightened now. Solomon was only curious; in him the broad day destroyed any superstitious feeling. Had it been dark, he would have been as terrified as he was before.

The noise was repeated over and over as they listened, and at last it ceased. It sounded like the conglomeration of the bellow of a bull, the roar of a lion, the yell of a madman, and the shriek of a steam-whistle, intermixed with other harsh and discordant noises that can scarcely be defined; and the whole result was one which can certainly not be likened to anything at all.

“That settles it!” said Bart at last.

“What?” asked Tom.

“Well, I’ve been giving the Gaspereaugians the

credit of that row at the money-hole, and when they came to-day I was certain of it; but this shows that they could have had nothing to do with it. It's over there, between us and the Academy, and sounds now in the direction of the money-hole."

"Now's the time to find it out," said Bruce. "I was going to propose a watch to-night, to see if we could get at the bottom of it. This is lucky, for we can examine it by daylight."

"It's the very same noise," said Arthur.

"O, there's no doubt about it," said Phil, "only it's farther off. That night the roar seemed to burst forth just behind me. It's the same in kind, only less in degree, as Mr. Simmons says."

"Come along then, boys," said Bart. "Don't let's lose any time. It must be somewhere about the old French orchard. Hurry up!" and with these words they all started off.

"De gracious!" cried Solomon. "Where you gwine to? You won't find nuffin. Dem sorts ob tings don't 'low derselves to be caught, mind, I tell you! Come back, chil'en, an finish yer dinna, an don't go actin. An me's been a cookin for you like all possessed. What's to become ob an ole darcy ef you won't eat? Dis heah ain't de proppa conduc fur de Bee See Double. I'll frow up my office. I won't be a Granpander any longer."

But the boys hurried away, and Solomon's voice

sounded upon the empty air. Thereupon he began collecting the dishes and eatables, and replacing them in his basket.

Leaving Solomon thus, the boys hurried on in a state of great excitement. The mystery had thus far weighed heavily on all their spirits. In Bruce it may have been superstitious feeling which made it oppressive to him; but in the others it was the mortification of their retreat and panic, and the unpleasantness of not being able to account for the cause. The sounds, as far as they could judge, seemed to come from the old French orchard; but Bruce insisted that it issued from the woods. This formed the subject of loud debate among them as they went on. The majority, however, were against Bruce, and thought that it was farther away than the limit of the woods.

“Can it be any of the boys, after all?” said Bart, as they went along the path. “Can Pat have in his possession any very remarkable kind of fish-horn or fog-horn?”

“Pat? Nonsense!” said Arthur. “Do you think that any power of Pat’s could produce such a noise?”

“O, I don’t know. He may have a private pocket steam engine, and occasionally let off steam to amuse himself.”

“You’ll have to hunt farther than Pat,” said Bruce, seriously.

“Why, man alive!” cried Bart; “you don’t think now that there’s anything in it — do you?”

Bruce said nothing.

They all hurried along the path, peering into the woods as they went on, and listening for a renewal of the sound.

But there was none.

At length they reached the gully, and, crossing it, they ascended the steep slope on the other side. This brought them to the old French orchard, and to the very cellar which had been the scene of their memorable midnight operations. Looking down into the cellar, they could see the traces of their work very plainly. They had filled in the hole as well as they could, but the ground bore visible marks of having been turned up.

"If any of the fellows have been up here," said Bart, "they must have noticed this."

"I don't think that follows," said Phil. "They wouldn't notice it, in my opinion."

"O, don't you believe that. The marks of digging there are enough to make any fellow notice them."

"Well, what if they do?" said Bruce. "They'll never think that we had anything to do with it. So we needn't bother our heads about that."

"The fact is," said Arthur, "none of them have been up here since they got back. Bogud and Billymack have been studying; Pat has been occupied on the hill; and the others have taken to the dikes. We're the only fellows that have been here at all."

"For my part," said Bart, "I should like to try that hole again. I don't believe there's anything there, but at the same time I don't like to leave a thing unfinished, especially where it's been broken off the way this was. And what's more, I'm bound to have another turn at it."

"And so am I," said Phil.

"And I," said Arthur.

"I'll be there," said Tom.

"Well, boys, I'll be there, too," said Bruce, "and we'll omit Solomon this time, and Captain Corbet. We may as well do it by daylight."

"Of course," said Bart, "it's all humbug to dig at night. It's ten times as much trouble, and then we lose our sleep. We can come up early some morning and do it. At the same time, I'm glad we had that night. It's something to look back upon."

"That's all very well," said Phil; "but I'd like to know why we can't hear that noise again. If it came from this hole, or from the old French orchard, now's the time for it. Here we are all ready. So roar away, somebody!"

They all sat down now on the grass, and listened for a while in silence. They could look over the gully on one side, and part of the play-ground on the other. On three sides the woods encircled them. Running along the play-ground on one side, where the woods ended was a pasture field belonging to Dr. Porter. This pasture field could not be seen from the place where they were.

They sat here for some time, waiting for the sound to arise again; and as they sat here, Solomon emerged from the woods, climbed the slope, and advanced towards them. He had replaced all the dishes and all the provisions in the basket, and was now carrying it back.

"Dar," he said, as he put it down. "It beats me. Don't see de use, no how, fur an ole ducky to go an broil his ole brack head off cookin and roastin all sorts ob tings if dey won't be eaten. An tings, too, what got captured by de Gasperojums! An what we skewered safe back out ob dere plunderin hans! Besides, — blubbed bruddren, if you don't eat my tings I feel kind o' slighted — I feel it a pusnul insult. Dat's so."

"O, well, Solomon, you know why we cleared out. So you've brought the basket. Well, why can't we go to work here? Come, boys, let's rise superior to circumstances, and finish our lunch."

Bart's proposal was greeted with a shout of joy, and once more Solomon, grinning with pride and delight, spread out before them his dishes and eatables.

They had just begun; they had just lifted to their still hungry and unsatisfied mouths a morsel or two, selected from among the dainties spread out by Solomon; they had just become familiar once more with the delicious flavor of some of his pet dishes, — when suddenly, without warning, and altogether unexpectedly, there burst forth again

that roar for which they had been waiting so long. Harsh, dissonant, ferocious, resonant in its bellowing intonations, it burst upon their ears, now much nearer than when they had heard it at the camp, and seeming very nearly as loud as it had been on that eventful night. The sound also seemed to come from Dr. Porter's pasture field. One moment they listened — that moment assured them of the true direction. The next moment they flung down their plates, and knives, and forks; and away they went, like madmen, over the field towards the pasture.

Solomon slowly rose to his feet and looked after them, with his head bent a little forward, and his hands clasped before him.

"Well, well, well!" he ejaculated, while an expression of unutterable disgust came over his dark face. "Well, well, well! ob all de contrairy chil'en dat I ebber *did* see! Nebber in de gracious sakes does dey know when dere well off. Heah's de second time dey pitch dere dinnas away. An what dat dinna cost me — ob trouble and hard work! But, O, dear, down it goes — O, yes — jes so — flung it all away — an leab dis ole nigga to pick all it up agen. Pity de Gasperojums didn't keep de basket. Dey'd 'preciate de dinna, any how — dat's so. 'Tain't de trouble," he grumbled on, as he picked up the things again, and put them in the basket, — "'tain't dat — no, sir. It's de want ob 'preciation. Collud folks likes to be 'preciated. So

does white folks. Dar's de doctor. Me an him likes to be 'preciated, — but dis sort ob ting's not 'greeble. De day'll come when dey'll like to hab one ob ole Solomon's dinnas."

So he went on, picking up the things, growling and grumbling to himself all the time, until at length he had filled the basket again, and went off in the direction where the boys had gone, to see what had become of them, and with a vague idea that the "dinna" would be resumed somewhere farther on.

He found the boys over in the pasture field, looking a little mystified.

The noises had ceased. A few cows were quietly grazing; and among them was an animal which was very familiar by name, but which none of them had ever before seen in the flesh. It was a simple, domestic animal, in some countries the most common of all; but to these boys it was a novelty. How it had got here was also a wonder; for they had no idea that it was here, and in their surprise they forget about the noises.

And what kind of an animal might this have been?

A quiet, a domestic, agreeable animal; in fact, only a little donkey.

"Solomon," said Bart, as he came up, "who owns the donkey?"

"De doctor," said Solomon.

"Why, how in the world did he happen to get one?"

“He bought him.”

“Yes, but what did he want of it?”

“O, for de chil'en to play with.”

“That's queer. I didn't know there was one.”

“O, you see de doctor got him de time you was off on de scursium. Ole scissa grinda come long, an de doctor bought de donkey. Ole scissa grinda beat de donkey so, dat de doctor got him, an means to keep him for de chil'en. Dat's all.”

“Poor old Neddy,” said Bart. “He's pretty lean. But he's all right now. This will be a Paradise for him. But I say, boys — I wonder how he rides. I've never been on a donkey's back in my life. Have you?”

“And I never saw one before,” said Bruce. “I can't say I admire him much.”

“Well, neither did I, for that matter,” said Bart; “and for that very reason I want to have a ride on him.”

Saying this, Bart went up to the donkey. The patient animal did not move, but calmly went on eating a delicious thistle that was under his nose. Bart got on his back. The donkey ate on, apparently unconscious of the weight. Bart caught hold of his long ears, and tried to pull up his head.

But the donkey ate on!

Then Bart slapped his flanks with his hands.

But the donkey ate on!

Then Bart kicked him vigorously with his heels.

But the donkey ate on !

Then he whistled, and shouted, and pulled his ears, and kicked at him, and mixed all sorts of encouraging words with acts of the most violent kind.

But the donkey ate on !

That donkey seemed to be about the most phlegmatic animal that they had ever met with. Bart was in despair. He looked over the field to see if there was a stick lying about anywhere. He asked the boys if they could see one. He now sat still, for a short time, on the donkey's back, waiting till he should find a stick.

While he was seated thus the donkey slowly lifted his head.

He had finished that thistle, and felt refreshed.

Slowly he elevated his head ; slowly he threw back his ears ; slowly also he elevated his tail ; until at last his nose was directed towards a point about twelve degrees above the northern horizon, and his tail to another point about eleven degrees above the southern.

Then he spread all his legs apart.

Then he opened his mouth.

Then : —

Hee haw ! Hee Haw !! Hee Haw !!!

Haw haw ! Hawwww ! Hee !

Hee haw ! Hee ! Haaaaw !

Hee-haw ! Hee-haw ! Haw !

Hee ! Haw ! Hee ! Haw !

Hee! Haw! Hee! Haw!

H-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E!

H-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-A-W!

Bart sprang from his back.

The other boys started and looked at one another in utter amazement.

One mystery was at last revealed!

X.

Irrepressible Outburst of Feeling from the Grand Panjandrum. — He enlarges upon the Dignity of his Office. — Spades again. — Digging once more. — At the old Place, my Boy. — Resumption of an unfinished Work. — Uncovering the Money-hole. — The Iron Plate. — The Cover of the "Iron Chest." — Tremendous, but restrained Excitement.

WUCH, then, was the explanation of the mystery of the discordant, the hideous roar. To those who have heard the bray of a donkey it will be intelligible how such a noise, sounding suddenly in the still midnight, to inexperienced ears may have been full of terror; while to those who have not heard it, a simple assertion of the above fact will, it is hoped, be all that is necessary. It was the donkey's bray which, according to the fable, terrified the animals of the forest, after he had put on the lion's skin. Now, this donkey was clothed in something more dreadful than a lion's skin: he was clothed in the darkness and the gloom of night, and his roar might well terrify those who heard it under such circumstances, without knowing whence it came.

After the first surprise they all burst into a roar of laughter. It was an immense relief to them all; but their merriment was a little intermingled with feelings of shame, as the dark and dreadful mystery thus resolved itself into the ridiculous form of a poor little donkey.

As for Solomon, the effect produced on him was greater than on the others. As the first peal of the bray struck his ears, he started, his jaw dropped, his eyes rolled up. Then, as the whole truth came to him, he dashed his hat to the ground, threw his head back, and burst into a perfect thunder-peal of laughter. There he stood, while the donkey brayed, swinging his aged frame and his grizzled head backward and forward, tossing his arms, and at last holding his aching sides.

And it was, —

“O, dis sight! De jackass! O, de gracious sakes! Shades an powers ob darkness! Sich a succumstance! An’ dis nigga a gwine mad wid feah about *dat*! An all de blubbed breddern ob de Double bubble: de mos’ wossfle, de patrick, de venebubble wodden, an all de ress, a flyin on de heels ob de Granjer pander drum! wid a small jackass a chasin all dem high an’ mighty ’ficials! Tinkin him de vengin sperrit ob a ole Cajian slashin an swingin a pot ob gold ober our bressed heads! O, dis erf alive! Nebber did dis nigga spec to fin out sich a succumstance! An de stonishing way we *did* put! Gracious! how my

ole heels did kick up! Reglar ravin stracted wid terror we was; mind, I tell you! An dar come a juvenile jackass out ob de wood to devour us up! Say, blubbed breddern, whar's dat ar minral rod? Spose you get dat ar stick for a ridin whip; wonder ef 'twouldn't make dat ar jackass gee up. Tell you what now, Mas'r Bart, you jest get on dat ar animal's back wid Mas'r Bruce, an' sing one or two ob dem dar cantations, an de rest ob you get some magic candles an set fire to de top knot on de end ob dat ar tail. Tell you what, dat'll make him gee up—will so! Yah! yah! yah! yah! yah! Ye-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-p!"

"Solomon, my son," said Bart, as the old fellow, after giving a wild yell, was getting ready for another outburst.

"Yes, mos wossfle," said Solomon, with a grin.

"Would it be too much to ask you to be kind enough to allow us to finish our rustic repast? As it was interrupted by the noise of this quadruped, we think that it would be very desirable to resume it, unless you prefer remaining here for the rest of the day imitating the animal before us."

"All right, mos wossible," said old Solomon, catching up his basket. "Couldn't help it. Had to let out strong. Bust if I hadn't did so. Fust man dat mentions de name ob a donkey to me, dis ole nigga'll bust. Dat's so!"

Saying this, Solomon kicked up one leg, then slapped one hand down hard on his knee, and stood

for a moment with his head bent down, while his whole frame shook with internal laughter. At length he raised his head, and presented to the view of the boys a face as grave, as demure, and as solemn as the visage of a judge who is about to pronounce a sentence, only there was an irrepressible twinkle in each of his small black beads of eyes which took a little from the mask of gravity with which his face was covered.

Then he took up the basket, and walked back towards the old French orchard. The boys passed him, reaching the cellar first. Then they all sat down again, and Solomon, for the third time, spread the table before them.

“Dis heah,” said he, “chil’en, am de third and de lass time. Ef any ob you runs away, he’ll lose his bressed dinna, now an forebbermore. Amen. So you go ahead, an eat, fass as you can. De visions ain’t gwine to spile your ’gestions.”

The boys were hungry, and ate in silence. Solomon stood apart unobserved, with a broad grin on his face, occasionally muttering to himself, and shaking all over with laughter. After each of these silent explosions, he would suddenly recover his gravity, mutter to himself some solemn rebuke, and look awfully grave for about half a minute, till a new explosion came.

That discovery had been too much for him. He had seen the donkey when it came, but he had never heard it bray. The terror over him had been

tremendous. Every night since then had been a night of fear, and it was the violent revulsion of feeling from his former panic which brought on this joyousness. It took him all the rest of the term to get over his tendency to burst forth on all occasions into fits of laughter.

At length the repast was over, and Solomon at last had the satisfaction of feeling that his efforts had been fully "preciated." The boys felt like giants refreshed, and Solomon looked with great complacency upon the bones of the fowls and the empty dishes.

"Dat's about de ticket," he said, as he piled the dishes into the basket. "Didn't want to carry back such a hebby load to de 'Cad'my. Been tuggin at it all day. Got to hurry back now."

"What, Solomon! you're not going?" said Bart.

"Got to — must."

"Nonsense! We can't spare you yet. We want to talk to you."

"Can't spar de time now, — mos 'portant business. De doctor allus specks me punct'ly. Got to get him his dinna. Dis is all very well for *play*; but business is business, an dat's what me 'n' de doctor's got to tend to. We've got de 'portant business ob life — de dinna 'partment."

"O, he'll get his dinner all right," said Arthur.

"What dat? He — de doctor — widout ME!"

Solomon rolled up his eyes till only the whites

were visible, and stood lost in wonder at the preposterous idea.

"Sich chil'en as you," said he, loftily, "don't ond'stan de ser'ous business ob life. Wait till you get to be sixty, an hab cooked as many dinnas as me; den you may talk."

"That's hard for us," said Tom, "if we have to become cooks and get to be sixty."

"Course it is — an I mean it to hit hard. A dinna's a dinna, an no mistake. Me 'n' de doctor knows dat. Why, whar'd de 'Cad'my be, ef I wasn't to give de doctor a rail fust-rate dinna ebery day? Me 'n' de doctor keep de 'Cad'my goin. He's de mas'r, an I'm de one dat keeps him a goin, an so we bofe ob us keep de 'Cad'my goin."

"Solomon," said Arthur, "you ought to be one of the teachers."

"Teachas!" said Solomon; "ain't I somefin more? What's a teacha? I'm a pro-fessa. I'm de 'fessa ob de cool an airy 'partment."

"Culinary," said Bart.

"No," said Solomon; "cool an airy. Dat's what de doctor said. Ses he, 'Solomon, you hab a 'portant 'sition, — you preside ober de cool an airy 'partment.' 'What's dat ar?' ses I. 'O,' ses he, 'it's only de Injin' fur cookin.' An I ups an toles him ef he'd ony stay down on some broilin, hot day in Auguss in de kitchen, he'd 'fess dat de Injin langidge didn't spress de idee, ef it called sich a oven of a place 'cool an airy.' Dat's what I tole him. — an' now, blubbed breddern, farewell!"

Saying this, Solomon took his basket, and retired from the scene.

"There's a great lot of these cellars about," said Arthur at last, after some silence, during which they had been sprawling on the grass beside the cellar. "There's a great lot of them. I wonder how many there are."

"O, two or three hundred, at least," said Bruce; "perhaps more."

"Well, for my part," said Bart, "I believe that there's money buried in some of them; and though our adventure was awfully ridiculous, yet that doesn't alter the sober fact, and I think the general belief is right."

"I go in for digging again," said Phil. "I don't believe in finding money, but we may find something."

"Bones, for instance," said Bruce.

"Yes, bones, if you like; and then we'd give them to the museum. Anything at all would be acceptable. It would take the edge off our disappointment of the other night."

"There's a great deal in that," said Bruce.

"I don't like giving it up altogether," said Bart. "We've begun it — let's finish it."

"And there's the hole," said Tom, "inviting us to come along."

"Besides," said Bruce, "don't you remember we struck something hard? and I *know* it wasn't a stone."

"No," said Arthur; "that's a fact, — all our shovels touched it. We all heard the dull, ringing sound it gave. It was metal. Let's go to work, I say."

"When?" said Bart.

"To-morrow morning," said Phil, "early —"

"No — I say *now*," said Arthur.

"So say I."

"And I."

"All right," said Phil; "I say so, too. But what'll we do for shovels?"

"Do? Why, we can go and get some, I suppose," said Bruce.

"But won't the fellows see us?"

"What if they do?"

"Why, they'll wonder what we're up to."

"What then?"

"They'll follow us, and see."

"Very well. We're not going to work in secret this time. We're working now in broad day. We haven't any mineral rod, nor any magic ceremonies. We're merely a plain, hard-working crowd; not of money-diggers, but of archæologists. We're not digging for pots of gold, but for curiosities and relics of the Acadian French. That's our position now, my boy; and a very much more dignified position it is than the one we occupied when we were making fools of ourselves the other night."

So spoke Bruce, who felt more keenly than the others the shame of that panic, for the reason that

he had been more deeply touched. Since then he had, over and over again, vindicated his courage most nobly, on occasions, too, when the exercise of that courage could only be accomplished by a supreme effort of his strong spirit; yet, in spite of this, he felt galled at the recollection of that night, and could not allude to it without bitterness.

"Well," said Phil, "if Jiggins, and Bogud, and the other lot are very inquisitive, I'll invite them up, and we can get them to do the digging."

"That's a very sensible way of viewing it," said Bart. "Yes, that's just what we'll do. For my part, I'd rather have them come than not, for, if they were to dig, our curiosity would be satisfied all the same, while our various muscles would not have to submit to such very violent exertion as is called forth by the unpleasant process of digging with a spade in such abominably hard ground."

"Well, Bart," said Bruce, "as soon as you've taken breath after that long-winded sentence, we'll start."

Up jumped Bart at this, and the others followed his example.

They went down to the Academy and obtained spades and a pickaxe without any difficulty. Shouldering these they paraded about the yard, in the hope of attracting attention. But to their great disappointment they didn't attract any attention whatever. The boys were all away, some in front, some out for a walk. So they came to the con-

clusion that they would have to do their own digging.

"At any rate," said Bart, as they walked back up the hill, "one comfort is, that we dug up the place before, and this time the ground will be softer."

"I've got the old pickaxe," said Bruce, "all ready in case of need."

"Whether we find anything or not, it will satisfy our minds."

"Yes, and then, you know, we can leave the hole open, and explain to the others why we dug it. We can induce them also to do a little more digging, perhaps."

"But if we find anything there'll be a still stronger temptation to dig."

"O, if we find anything, all the cellars in the place will be turned inside out."

"David Digg will have a chance to prove himself deserving of his name."

"What a joke it would be if Pat were to see us! He'd be wild with curiosity, and follow us so as to see."

"O, there's no danger. Nobody'll come — that's just because we want them," said Phil.

Chatting in this way they marched up the hill, back again to the old French orchard, which they reached without having attracted the smallest attention from anybody, and at length they all stood once more with their spades by the cellar. Very

different was this occasion from the last, and they all felt it so. The last had been one of pure fun and nonsense, disturbed, however, by the tremors of some of their number; this time, on the contrary, was an occasion in which business seemed to predominate.

They paused for a little while on the edge of the cellar, before committing themselves to their work.

Upon this Bart began to whine out through his nose a doleful ditty, to the tune of Auld Lang Syne.

“Whene’er I take my walks abroad
How many holes I see!
But how they came upon the ground
Completely puzzles me.

“Here once the peaceful Frenchman dwelt,
And passed his happy days
In draining bogs, devouring frogs,
And cultivating maize.

“These holes, no doubt, were dug by him;
We see them all around;
And all Grand Pré to me appears
A very holy ground.”

“That’s what Captain Corbet would call a ‘hime,’” said Phil, with a laugh. “It’s too solemn, Bart, for this occasion. We want something business-like now.”

“Then here goes,” said Bart, who had a happy talent for improvising. And he droned out the

following, in a whining voice, but to a livelier measure : —

“ Over Minas’s Bay
Came the French to Grand Pré,
And they all were remarkable fellers ;
They lived upon frogs,
And they wore wooden clogs,
And preserved their potatoes in cellars.”

“ There,” said Arthur, “ that’s enough, Bart. If we don’t stop you now, you’ll go on till sundown. If we’re going to dig, we’d better begin, for it’s getting late, and it’ll be dark before we know it.”

“ All right, my son,” said Bart. “ Here goes — come along.”

And seizing his spade, he rushed down into the cellar ; and plunging it deep into the earth, he began to throw it out.

“ Hurrah, Bart ! ” cried Bruce. “ Dig away, old man ! You’ll turn up the whole cellar, at that rate, before we can get down. Leave something for us, though, just for the name of the thing, you know.”

“ Come along,” cried Bart, throwing out his seventh shovelful.

By this time they were all at the hole, and plunged in their spades. Out flew the earth. In their zealous work the shovels clashed against one another furiously, and rather impeded their progress ; but in spite of this, the earth was thrown out with a rapidity that contrasted in a very striking manner with the slowness of their progress on that former occasion. Then, the earth was rigid, and

hard bound with the turf that had been accumulating for generations, and Bruce's pickaxe had to prepare the way for the slow entrance of their spades. But now, their spades went in easily, and the pickaxe as yet was not needed.

But the work of digging was an unusual one, and their violent efforts exhausted them before they had worked for a long time. They paused for a moment and rested.

"We're almost at the bottom," said Bart.

"That depends on what you mean by the bottom," said Arthur.

"Well, I mean, we're almost as far down as we were before."

"But I wonder whether we shall strike that metallic substance that we struck before," said Arthur.

"I'll soon see," said Bruce.

Saying this, he took the pickaxe, and giving it a swing, brought it down into the centre of the hole.

It penetrated a short distance, and then stopped short, with a low, dull sound, as though it had struck something hard.

That sound roused the boys once more, and stimulated them to fresh exertions. They again plunged their spades into the earth. All their first energy was now restored. They forgot their fatigue. Something was there, they knew. What it was they could not tell; but they knew that it must be the same thing that had excited them once

before, and from which they had been driven by the sudden bray of that absurd donkey. Now, all that nonsense had been explained; and they knew that this last vestige of the mystery of that midnight hour lay beneath them, and would soon be exhumed and brought to the light of day.

Lower and lower they went.

And now their shovels struck it at every stroke. It seemed metallic. The dull ringing sound given forth could not come from wood, or brick, or stone. It must be metal!

But what?

Was it a pot, or an iron chest?

Pooh!

At any rate they were glad that the other fellows were not present.

Such thoughts and feelings passed through their minds as they came down nearer to the object of their search.

XI.

Farther and farther down, and sudden Revelation of the Truth. — Rising superior to Circumstances. — The “Pot of Money,” and other buried Treasures. — They take all these exhumed Treasures to Dr. Porter. — Singular Reception of the excited Visitors.

IN deep excitement they continued to dig in silence, and thus came gradually nearer to the object of their search. At last the loose earth was all thrown out, and only the old hard-bound soil was left; while there, at the bottom of the cavity, lay exposed a portion of an iron surface, dented now and scratched by the blows which it had received. It was very rusty; the rust, in fact, covered it in great scales, showing that it must have been buried there for many years. As yet only a few square inches of the surface were visible, and it was impossible to tell as yet what it was. But they all felt sure that it was an iron chest.

Bruce now took his pickaxe, and began loosening the hard-bound earth that surrounded the hole.

"It's lucky it's so near the surface," said Bart.

"I suppose he hadn't time to bury it any deeper," said Phil.

"No," said Arthur; "he must have been hurrying off, you know."

"Perhaps we won't be able to lift it," said Tom.
"What'll we do then?"

"We'll have to get Solomon and Captain Corbet," said Phil.

"For that matter," said Bart, "we can rig up blocks and pulleys, and hoist it up. We'll have to dig all around it, though."

"We may not have it done to-night."

"If it's very heavy, we won't."

"But we must."

"O, yes, it wouldn't do to leave it till morning."

"Can't we get lights?"

"If we do get lights, we'd better postpone it till midnight."

"But we ought to do as much as we can by daylight."

"O, of course, while the daylight lasts, we'll keep at it."

Bruce now laid down his pickaxe, and they went to work with their shovels, and at last the loose earth was thrown out once more. They had now uncovered what seemed like one side of the top of the box, and its edge was plainly apparent. The rest of it was still covered by the superincumbent soil.

"That's the edge of the box," said Bart. "We didn't hit it fair in the centre."

"It's a good-sized box, too."

"And it'll be awfully heavy."

"I wonder if it is much larger."

"We'd better uncover the rest of it, so as to see the size of it. There don't seem to be any kind of rivets here, or anything of that sort."

"O, you can't tell. It's so covered with rust."

"Countersunk rivets on an iron plate would be quite concealed if they were all covered with scales of rust."

"Come, I'll dig more on this side," said Bruce, taking up his pickaxe again. A few blows directed against the other side served to loosen the earth there, and the eager boys soon threw it out, and laid bare more of the surface. Bruce worked away with his pickaxe at the same time. There was now room for only two to work. The others looked on with beating hearts.

"Hallo!" cried Bruce, suddenly.

"What?" asked Bart.

"Why, the top's loose!"

"Loose! Hurrah! We can lift it off then, and get into the box."

Bruce said nothing, but stooped down. Bart, who had been digging, stooped down, too. The other boys crowded around.

Bruce dug his fingers into the earth by the edge of the iron, and rattled it with his hands. Then he tried to lift it up.

It moved !

As it moved, he worked his fingers underneath it, and raised it up on its edge.

He said not one word, but lifted it up, and held it before the eyes of the "B. O. W. C."

And as they looked at it they were struck dumb, and stood paralyzed with amazement and disgust.

For there, in Bruce's hands, held up to the light of day, the iron lid of the iron money-chest, that coffer lid that concealed so much treasure, buried long ago by the fugitive Frenchman, to be exhumed by their fortunate hands, — that iron lid which had been the source of so much excitement and hope, had resolved itself into nothing better than *a rusty old ploughshare !*

Again holding it till he was tired, Bruce handed it solemnly to Bart.

"Here, Bart," said he, "I'll give all my share to you."

"And I present all that you give me and all my own to Tom," said Bart, taking it and passing it on to Tom.

Tom took it and handed it to Arthur.

"I make it over to you, Arthur," said he.

"And I make it over to Phil," said Arthur.

Phil took it.

"Very well," said he. "I hereby give and bequeath all my right, title, and interest, in and to the said ploughshare, to the Academy Museum, its curators and officials, to have and to hold forever-

more, amen, and anything to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding."

By this time the boys had recovered from their astonishment, disappointment, and disgust.

"That comes of being so sanguine," said Bart. "Boys, why would you allow yourselves to grow so excited?"

"Fancy a fugitive Acadian solemnly burying his plough."

"It was all he had, poor wretch, I dare say."

"But why bury it in his cellar? Why not in his potato field?"

"For my part, I don't believe in the Acadian French."

"I think they're humbugs."

"And this is all that remains of the wealth of 'Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest farmer in Grand Pré'!"

"Perhaps he intended it as a quiet hint to show those who were in a hurry to get rich the true source of wealth. The plough is that, you know; so the copy-books all say, at any rate."

"Well, I'm glad we've got even this. It makes archæologists of us. We'll make it a present to the Museum. The doctor'll be delighted. Perhaps he'll give us an extra holiday. Every scale of rust will be precious in his eyes; and he'll paste a nice label on it, with all our names immortalized, and the date of the discovery. It will be the chief

treasure of the Museum. Where'll David Diggs's crystal be, or Billymack's moss agate, or Jiggins's petrifications, beside our plough?"

"I wonder if we couldn't find something else, so as to make a handsome thing out of it. An old rusty nail would be better than nothing."

"That's a capital idea," cried Bruce, seizing his pickaxe again. "Never say die, boys. We'll go back covered with glory, after all, and our names will be handed down to future generations of boys yet to come to the old place."

Saying this, Bruce began working away once more with his pickaxe; and the others, excited by this new idea, and the prospect of gaining some kind of a reward for all their toil, took their shovels again, and waited till Bruce should loosen the earth sufficiently for them to dig it.

At length this was done, and they began to shovel it out. They had not worked five minutes before Tom cried, —

"Hallo! here's something, at any rate."

Saying this, he stooped down and picked something out of the ground, which he showed the boys. They examined it eagerly, and saw that it was a colter, probably belonging to the plough, from which the ploughshare had been taken. Scarcely had he handed this to the boys than he saw lying at his feet an iron bolt. This encouraged them all the more. The colter and the bolt were placed beside the ploughshare, and they worked on vigor-

ously, each one hoping to make some discovery of his own.

In a little while Bruce struck something, which, on examination, proved to be the end of a chain. After diligent labor he succeeded in detaching it all from the ground, and laid it down upon the grass. It was an ox chain, about six feet long.

This, of course, only increased their excitement; so they all went to work again.

At last Phil, with all his strength, dragged something out of the ground, and with a shout put it down beside the other things. It was a small iron pot, which had been used for cooking. It was now full of earth, and Phil, seizing the colter, began to pick it out.

"This is the famous pot," cried Phil, with a laugh; "but the money inside has all turned to dust because we dug it in the daytime."

"Money?" cried Arthur. "Don't laugh about money. What do you say to that?"

And he held out on his open palm three very dirty coins. What they were they could not tell, whether silver, or iron, or what. They looked like very dirty round stones. The boys took them and examined them carefully. Bart drew his knife, and scraped off the rust and canker.

"More of old Benedict Bellefontaine," said he, at last. "We can't make anything out of him. See here!"

And holding out the coin, he showed where he

had scraped it. There they could read, faintly marked, letters, which formed the following: —

UN
SOU.

They were somewhat disappointed at this, and scraped the other coins, but found them all copper.

“Pooh!” said Arthur; “what’s the odds? To an archæologist isn’t a copper coin as precious as a gold one? Of course it is. Hallo, Phil! Haven’t you got that pot cleaned out yet? I’ve got an idea. I’ll put these sous in the pot, and then we can say that we’ve found a pot of money. We’ll be generous, too — we’ll give it all to the Museum.”

Phil’s pot by this time was empty, and Arthur laughingly threw the sous into it. After this they began their search again, and enlarged the hole in hopes of finding more around the sides. And in this they were successful, for they found, near, a dozen more copper coins, which made a very respectable appearance in the pot, and in addition to these, about a dozen bits of iron — nails, spikes, and bolts.

“Hallo, boys! look here!” cried Bart, suddenly. He held in his hand an old, discolored bone. “Talking about relics,” said he, “here’s a relic of the original owner. The question is though, Is it a human bone?”

“Pooh!” said Arthur; “it’s an ox bone, or a horse.”

“Not a bit of it,” said Bart. “I’m determined that it shall be Benedict Bellefontaine.”

"It's a horse's bone," said Phil.

"No," said Bart; "I'll keep it carefully, and let the doctor have it. It will be the most precious article in the Museum."

It was now growing too dark to work any longer. The sun had set, and they were satisfied with the result of their labors. So they gathered together their treasures, and set out for the Academy.

These treasures seemed to them to be by no means despicable.

They were, —

- 1 ploughshare,
- 1 colter,
- 4 bolts,
- 1 chain,
- 1 iron pot,
- 3 nails,
- 2 bits of iron,
- 2 spikes,
- 13 copper coins,
- 1 bone.

And any one who has ever been connected with a small museum, or has ever been acquainted with those who are connected with a valuable institution like that, will easily understand the value of articles like these, exhumed direct from the cellar of an old Acadian house.

The boys felt no doubt whatever as to the value of their treasure. In fact, they grew so excited over it that they began at last to think what they

had found far better than what they hoped to find; and so it resulted that those who had gone out to find gold came back rejoicing in rusty iron.

On reaching the Academy they went at once to Dr. Porter's house. They found the doctor at home, and were ushered up at once to his study.

The boys said nothing, but gravely, and in impressive silence, laid down their treasures on the doctor's study table. It was covered with books and papers; but they were too oblivious of every thing, and too much absorbed in the contemplation of their own things, to think of that.

So Bruce entered first, and placed on the doctor's table, right over some handsome volumes of Euripides, just received from London, the rusty, dirty old ploughshare.

"Hallo!" cried the doctor. "Why! what!—"

But before he could finish his sentence, Tom came up, and laid down a dozen old spikes and nails. Both of them turned and looked proudly at the doctor.

"Look here, boys," cried the doctor, standing up; "what—"

He was interrupted by Phil, who came forward between him and the first boys, carrying an iron pot, which he triumphantly placed on a handsomely bound Hebrew Lexicon.

"What in the world—" began the doctor again, but was again interrupted by Arthur, who solemnly placed the colter on a new edition of Longinus,

and then put the chain on some late English Quarterly Reviews. Just as the doctor was about to burst forth, Bart came immediately before him, and, with a face radiant with delight, laid down, right on the doctor's blotting pad, that horrible discolored, and disintegrated old bone.

For a moment it seemed that the doctor would burst forth in a fury. To him this behavior was the sublimity of unparalleled impudence ; the act was so absolutely unequalled in its quiet audacity, that it actually made him dumb with amazement. The ploughshare, the colter, the iron pot, the rusty spikes and bolts, the old chain,—all these were so many stages up which his astonishment went to a climax which was fully attained when Bart put down the abominable old bone.

This was too much.

Then the doctor burst forth.

But not in fierce and furious indignation, and vehement and violent denunciation. It struck him in another way. It was his sense of the ridiculous that was affected. He forgot the ruin done to his precious editions of the classics, and his mind could only grasp the innocent, smiling faces of these five young rascals who had come into the awful seclusion of his own study to pile up his inviolable study table with old iron and old bones.

And so it was that the doctor burst forth into an uncontrollable fit of laughter,—not a common laugh, but one which was sent forth from the very

depths of his nature, — all absorbing, overwhelming. Peal after peal, irrepressible. It was contagious, too. The boys caught it. They tried to restrain themselves at first. They tittered. They began to see themselves the absurdity of their act. The thought overcame them, and they all burst forth, too. The whole company thus went off into fearful explosions — cataclysms, in fact, of laughter.

It roused the house.

The family came running up to see the cause.

The doctor could not utter a word. Tears were running from his eyes; he could only point in silence to the old iron and old bone. The contagion seized upon the family also, and they all went off into the general laughter.

At length the boys took the things off the table, and put them on the floor. Gradually the doctor recovered his self-control, and asked the boys what it all meant. They told him all about it. He listened to them with a serious face, which, however, was occasionally disturbed by a tendency to another outburst, as again and again the thought of the past scene forced itself back. Finally, he managed to get the whole story, and by that time his laughter passed, and was succeeded by a new sensation.

It was one of intense delight at such discoveries. Now they appeared before him, not as old iron and old bone, but in their true character. He was an

enthusiastic antiquarian, and all connected with the Acadian French excited his passionate interest. He looked affectionately at the ploughshare. He handled the colter tenderly. He examined one by one, with minute inspection, the spikes and the bolt. He scanned narrowly and admiringly the iron pot. He passed every link of the rusty chain through his fingers. He lingered long and lovingly over the coins, closely examining every one of them. He looked at the bone with an intense curiosity, mingled with deep sympathy for the unfortunate race of which it was the reminder.

He threw himself into his admiration over these with the same abandonment of feeling that had characterized his laughing fit. It was a proud and a delightful moment for the boys when they found that their discoveries were so highly prized. The doctor declared that there was nothing in the Museum to be compared with them, and finally sent for Messrs. Simmons and Long. These gentlemen soon appeared, and exhibited an interest in these Acadian relics which was fully equal to that of the doctor.

But the wonder was, to all of them, how in the world the boys had happened to think of digging in that particular place. They questioned them closely, though good humoredly, about this; and Bart, after vain efforts at eluding the questions, finally told the whole story.

Bart told that story in such a whimsical way, and

XII.

The Doctor's Proposal. — Blomidon. — The Expedition by Land. — The Drive by Morning Twilight. — The North Mountain. — Breakfasting amid the Splendors of Nature. — The illimitable Prospect. — The Doctor tells the Story of the French Acadians.

“**B**OYS,” said the doctor, after Bart had ended his narrative, “it isn’t often that such nonsense as yours was turns out so well in the end. I’d rather have this old iron pot, with these old black sous, than even that pot of gold which dazzled your imaginations so when you were digging. If all mineral rods were to be so very lucky as Captain Corbet’s was, we might go and test every old French cellar in the country. I can assure you this is a gift of no common value. The rust marks and the mud which you have made on my books and papers are rather welcome than otherwise. Bart’s bone ought to receive a very careful examination. I think we ought to dig up the whole cellar, and we may find more bones there.

“But I’ve got a proposal to make, which, perhaps, you will think a reward for your discovery. To-morrow is Saturday. How would you like to go off with me on an excursion for the day,—you and the other boys,—the same party, in fact, that went with Mr. Long?”

“An excursion!” cried the boys, with radiant faces.

“Yes,” said the doctor. “I’ve been intending to make one for some time. I was disappointed in not going with you in the schooner. These relics have revived an idea which I had last year, but was not able to put in practice. It is this: I have good reason to believe that somewhere on the top of Blomidon there once stood a French fort, and that the ruins are very distinctly visible yet. I have a very clear idea in my mind of the exact locality, and think I can find it without any trouble. I am very anxious to go there, and perhaps we can find more French relics to add to our little stock in the Museum.

“Now, my plan is this: I will take my carriages and horses, and the whole party can be accommodated. We will take provisions for the day. We must start as early as four o’clock, so as to be at the mountain early. We can breakfast over there. After we have found the French fort, I wish to have a few hours for a quiet examination of the cliffs. I know some good places for minerals, and I think I can obtain a basket full without much

trouble. I will see about the baskets, shovels, and hammers. We shall want a spade or two, and I think, under the circumstances, we can spend a very pleasant day. Now, what do you say to that?"

The answer of the delighted boys came in a perfect chorus of incoherent and unintelligible words, in which, however, could easily be perceived the language of intense excitement and of joyous assent.

"Very well," said the doctor. "You let the other boys know, and remember you must all be ready on the spot by four o'clock to-morrow morning — not a minute later."

After this the boys retired in great spirits to let the others know the good fortune that awaited them on the morrow.

The following morning came, and all the boys were on the spot before the appointed time. The doctor had three double wagons ready, drawn by six horses, and filled with provisions, and all the implements that might, by any possibility, be needed. It was quite dark as yet, but they started in high glee, and as they drove along it became lighter every moment.

They all felt the importance of the occasion. No frolicking this time. No dressing up like scarecrows. No running ashore on mud flats. No getting lost in fogs. No feeding on clams. No starvation. Everything was now to be perfectly regu-

lar, perfectly orthodox, and rather dignified. They were going, in the twofold capacity of archæologists and geologists, to search after the ruins of an ancient and historic fortress, and then to find the mate of that amethyst which was taken from here to delight a king of France.

At first, as they drove on through the level country, all the fields and woods around lay wrapped in shadow; but as they went on the shadows lessened, and they began to see the first rays of dawn. Leaving the higher country, they at length descended into the dike land, which they traversed, and at length reached the bridge that crosses Cornwallis River. Then they went off over the wide vale of Cornwallis towards the North Mountain.

On and on. The vale of Cornwallis has five different indentations, up which the sea once flowed; but these are now reclaimed, and here the green and fertile meadows spread out where once was red mud or salt sea. On the long ridges between these diked districts are the houses of the farmers, and woods, and orchards, and groves, and gardens. On every side are the evidences of plenty and prosperity. Here and there small villages appear, the centre of trade. The roads are numerous, running every way, and are known by the name of streets. Nowhere can a country be found which enjoys a greater abundance of all the richest gifts of nature, a larger measure of all that can charm the eye, or invigorate the body, or confer

wealth and prosperity. Nowhere in the world can actual working farmers be found whose tables are so loaded with varied and substantial dishes. The Cornwallis farmers have not yet learned to use everything that they have for purposes of trade. They are satisfied with making money on one or two leading products, but reserve their turkeys, and chickens, and cheese, and hams, and eggs, and apples, and plums, to weigh down their own dinner tables.

On they went through streets, as they were called, — which in some places were so closely bordered with houses that they deserved the name, — past beautiful villas hidden among trees, past rich orchards, past long hedgerows, past churches which pointed heavenward their tapering spires; on they rode through busy little villages, over the broad dike lands, whose rich, green robe extended far away on either side; along the edge of deep mud gulches, which were to be filled by the rising tide; over roads where there was not a stone to be seen, but only that soft, red soil which makes such rich fields, but such wretched paths; and still, as they went on, it constantly grew brighter, until at last the red sun bounded up into the sky, and threw his glow over all the scene.

At length they approached the North Mountain. The place towards which they went was six or seven miles this side of Cape Blomidon, and the carriage road wound up it on its way to settlements

on the shore of the Bay of Fundy. Up this road they went, and soon they all reached the top of the hill.

They drove for a mile along the ridge of the North Mountain, and at length came to a place where the roadside was bare of trees, and the hillside sloped very abruptly down towards the plain. It was a place well known to all of them. It was a favorite resort for the whole country on occasions of picnics or driving parties. Everything here was familiar—the brook where they could get water, the big stone against which they could build their fire. Here they drew up their horses, and prepared to take their breakfast. The fire was soon burning; the kettle was filled with water, and was soon boiling; the tea was made, and the ample repast was spread out upon the grass. Here they sat, satisfying their hunger, rendered keen by over two hours' driving in the fresh morning air, chatting merrily, and looking forth from their lofty seat upon one of the most glorious views that can be conceived.

In truth, it was a glorious prospect. Beneath them lay the plains of Cornwallis, which all stood revealed to their elevated position with that peculiar effect known as “a bird's eye view.” There the valleys spread away with their intervening ridges; there ran the long, straight streets; there rose the villas embowered among trees, the neat farm-houses, and the tapering spires of churches.

The vivid green of the dike land surrounded all this, streaked here and there by the long lines of woodland that rose on the low ridges, dotted by groves and orchards, and intersected by the red-colored soil of the roads. Far away on the opposite side lay the slopes of Grand Pré, with the gleaming white of the houses dotting the green fields, and there were the outlines of familiar objects, conspicuous among which was the Academy, which rose immediately opposite, though many miles away. Between them the sea rolled its waters, extending far away towards the left, where the shores were so low that in one place the sea and sky seemed to blend together; but in other places the shores stood out in bolder reliefs, and there arose precipitous cliffs, and abrupt bluffs, and lofty hills. These were on the extreme left, where the eye could embrace a prospect that extended for fifty miles, while on the right the eye could wander for many a mile, far away along that valley which lies between the North Mountain and the South, and out of which there now came the Cornwallis River, with many a winding to receive the flood tide of the Basin of Minas.

It was upon this scene that they gazed as they took their breakfast; and while the emotions of each were different, all felt the same general glow that was naturally produced by the exhilaration of such a prospect and such a position. Blomidon could not be seen, for that was hidden behind a

projection on the coast-line that ran down towards the cape, and thus the scene was deprived of that grand figure which from every other point is so attractive. Yet the elevation of their position here, and the peculiar way in which the plain lay spread out at their feet, and the vast extent of country which was embraced by the eye, served, in some measure, to make amends for the absence of the majestic cliff.

And there, beneath them, the waters spread afar, red and turbid near the shore, but farther out changing to deep blue; while towards the left, where Blomidon lay hid, guarding the strait, they could see a mass of fog, which had been thrust in from the outside bay, and stood there a gray opaque wall, towering high above the water. Even as they gazed, there shot out from that gray mass of fog a little schooner, which had thus leaped in a moment from darkness into sunlight, and, like a bird escaping suddenly from some gloomy cage, seemed to spread her wings joyously, and move exultantly through the fresh, clear air.

“What a glorious prospect!” exclaimed Dr. Porter, who had been silently enjoying the view for a long time. “Is it any wonder that the old Acadians loved this country of theirs so passionately, and made such desperate struggles to get back after they had been driven out?”

“Did they try to get back, sir?” asked Bart.

"I should think they did; and many succeeded, though they could not live again in Grand Pré. But what a bitter thing it was to be torn, as they were torn, from such a home as this, and scattered at random over all the coast of North America!"

"Wasn't the government sorry for it afterwards?" asked Tom.

"O, no; it was one of the cruelties of war. After all, it was not as bad as the sack of a city, or even the bombardment of one. All these things are alike abominable, and full of horror. The government considered themselves well rid of people who were a trouble to them. That's all."

"But I don't see why they couldn't have let them alone."

"It's a sad story," said the doctor, shaking his head. "I'll tell you about it."

At this the boys all gathered around him. Some of them knew that story pretty well; but others did not, and even those who did were very glad of the chance of hearing it again.

"You all know about the discovery of America by Columbus," began the doctor, "and the voyages of Cabot immediately after. The French soon rivalled the English, and Spanish, and Portuguese. Cartier and Champlain sailed over all these seas, and by all these coasts, devoting themselves chiefly to what is now British America. It is certainly a strange thing that the part of America which was originally British should now have

passed away from British rule, and the only British America now should be that which was originally French.

“Many years passed away, and no colonies were formed. At last, at nearly the same time, the French and English both began. The French, however, were first. They came over, and in 1606 founded Port Royal—now Annapolis, you know. A year or two after, the English founded Jamestown, and the French Quebec. So, you see, our little Annapolis is the oldest place on the continent of America founded by Europeans, with, perhaps, the exception of St. Augustine, in Florida.

“This beginning showed how things would go. The English took the Atlantic seaboard, from Massachusetts to the Carolinas, while the French took those countries that are now British provinces. At first but little progress was made in this country. Its history consists chiefly of the rivalry of two leading French families, who maintained trading stations, and struggled for the pre-eminence out here, and for support from the French government. Still the settlements grew, and not long after Port Royal was founded, the French established other places also, and among them Grand Pré settlement. They came here, cleared the forest, diked the marshes, and soon became a prosperous and a happy community.

“So things went on. Meanwhile, the French and English were engaged in continual wars. Port

Royal was captured some half a dozen times. But at length one of these wars was concluded by the peace of Utrecht, in 1713, by which this province was ceded to the English.

“At the time of the cession it was supposed that all the French population would retire. The English allowed them a year to sell their property and depart; with the permission to remain, however, if they would take the oath of allegiance. But none were willing to take the oath. As to going away, that soon proved to be a difficult matter. In the first place, it was impossible for them to sell their farms, for there were none to buy them. In the second place, it was impossible to get away, for there were no ships to take them. The French government would not send ships, for they hoped in the course of time to get back the country, and preferred that this French population should remain. The English, on the other hand, wouldn't send their ships, first, because they thought it was the business of the French government to do so; and secondly, because the state of affairs out here scarcely excited any attention whatever in the home government.

“Meanwhile, the English held the country, after a fashion. They didn't establish any towns, or send out any emigrants, but merely sent a governor to Annapolis, as they now called Port Royal, with a nominal regiment of soldiers. These soldiers were neglected most abominably. Their numbers

dwindled down to a small company ; they were ragged, and without sufficient arms and ammunition. The fort went to ruin. One governor went to England, and lived there, drawing his pay, and letting the soldiers and the fort get along the best way they could.

“ At length one of the governors made an effort to do something. The French, instead of quitting the country, had increased in numbers to an alarming extent. So an attempt was made to get them to sign an oath of allegiance to the King of England. This they refused to do, unless a proviso were inserted in the oath, that they should not be called upon to bear arms.’ The governor, after some demur, acceded to this request, and wrote the proviso on the margin of the document, which was then signed. After this the English government repudiated this as utterly unreasonable, and other governors made various efforts to get the French to sign an unconditional oath, but only with partial success. The majority of them claimed that indulgence which had been granted by the proviso, and in accordance with this they determined to help neither party, not even their own countrymen. They assumed the name of Neutrals, by which they were known to both parties.

“ The English could do nothing. There was only a handful of soldiers at Annapolis, and though they were afterwards taken better care of, yet

the soldiers and the fort formed but a weak representation of the power of Britain. The French were increasing in numbers. Here in Grand Pré they were most numerous and most prosperous. They were peaceable, and happy, and industrious, and contented. As a general thing, they maintained most faithfully their position of neutrality. French agents came among them to rouse them to action, but met with no response. French missionary priests, acting as agents for the French governors of Quebec and Louisbourg, tried to stir up their patriotic ardor, but without much success. An expedition came from Louisbourg against Annapolis, but the Acadians did not join it. Only a few joined the invading army, and when they made an attack on Annapolis, the little English garrison was able to beat them off. No fact can speak more plainly than this in favor of the utter peacefulness of their dispositions, and their fixed determination to keep out of all difficulties. That neutrality which they professed they maintained as perfectly as it was possible for any community.

“So things went on until the year 1749, when the English government took the affairs of the long-neglected Province of Nova Scotia into their consideration, and determined to colonize it on a large scale. So they sent out a fleet with thousands of emigrants, and built the town of Halifax. This was intended to be a counterpoise to Quebec,

and also an assertion of their power in the Province of Nova Scotia. Besides this place, which they made the capital, instead of Annapolis, they formed other settlements.

“But they soon found themselves cramped. The French, having been there first, had taken possession of all the most eligible lands. The places to which emigrants would most wish to go were already filled up. Annapolis, and Grand Pré, and other places were occupied; and the English who wished to settle had to go to places which were far inferior. Besides this, the English wanted every man in the country to be an active assistant, — not a neutral. All these things combined to make the question of the Acadians a very troublesome one. The very faithfulness with which they had maintained their professions of neutrality made it all the more difficult; and for some years the English settlers found themselves thus shut out from the best part of the province, and confined to those portions which could never be developed to any extent.

“You must remember that it was not the Province of Nova Scotia, but all the British colonies in America, that participated in this question. All along the Atlantic coast the provinces watched with eager interest the progress of the English settlement here. Hundreds came to Halifax from Massachusetts and New York. They all belonged to that great English party which, on this side of

the Atlantic, was carrying on a never-ending war with the French. It was a question between the French and English races, which should rule. The English were far superior as colonizers, the French as organizers. The English settlers increased and multiplied; the French kept up formidable forts and armies, and enlisted vast numbers of Indians on their side. There were a million and a half of English, but not a hundred thousand French; yet the French kept armies on foot which the English could barely equal. Besides, the French had a grand scheme by which they hoped to crush the growth of the English, and finally subdue them. They held all the valley of the St. Lawrence, and the valley of the Mississippi. They had settlements on both rivers, and their great scheme was to build a line of forts from the Mississippi to the St. Lawrence, which should act as a wall to hem in the English, and keep them within that narrow line of territory which lies along the Atlantic shore. All this alarmed the colonies. They were ready to fight against the French for this boundary line, and were determined from the very outset to recognize no barrier whatever against their progress westward. Nominal peace might be between France and England at home, but out here there was never peace. War went on all along the line of forts, and the French, with their Indians, struggled with the hardy English colonists. Between all the English colonies there was one universal

sympathy; and while Nova Scotia watched the progress of her more southern sisters with intense interest, they, on their part, watched the progress of affairs in Nova Scotia with interest no less intense. All were alike struggling with one common enemy. Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, all were watching to see how Halifax would deal with the Acadians, or with Louisbourg; while Nova Scotia was waiting to see how they would deal with the Ohio forts.

“You may imagine, then, what was the feeling here when the news came of the expedition of that thick-headed and pragmatical fool General Braddock; of his disastrous and abominable defeat, when his army was ruined, and his own life thrown away, by a miserably inferior number of French and Indians. A panic spread everywhere, and that panic which ran through the other colonies was strong in Nova Scotia.

“Soon after, an opportunity arose to deal with the Acadians. The governor was a strong-willed, determined, and energetic man. A powerful fleet and army had assembled at Halifax. It was resolved to deal summarily with the Acadians.

“But how? That was the question. It would not do to march an army against them and expel them from their homes. They would merely fly to the woods, and when the army had left, they would come back. So it was resolved to expel them from their homes altogether.

“But how? Again the question arose. If they merely expelled them, giving them the liberty of flying anywhere, they would all go to Cape Breton, to swell the numbers of their foes. If they conveyed them away to any particular place, they might be formidable from their numbers, and find means of coming back in a body. So it was determined to carry them off from Nova Scotia, and scatter them as widely as possible over all the colonies along the Atlantic coast.

“By way of a beginning, they resolved to give the Acadians one last chance to take the oath of allegiance, though they knew that the offer was useless. So they sent for the leading men of the settlements, and brought them to Halifax. There they were told that they must take the oath, or submit to punishment. The Acadians refused, and pleaded their rights as neutrals. Their plea was rejected, and they were imprisoned.

“After this the measures which were taken were swift and summary. Before the Acadians could know what had happened, British troops appeared at each of the settlements. At Grand Pré they summoned all the inhabitants to a place of meeting. The Acadians came without suspicion. There they were all arrested. Vessels were all ready to receive them, and they were put on board. Husbands were separated from their wives, fathers from their children, never to meet again. They were all packed on board of the vessels. These

vessels were nearly all small schooners, which had been chartered by the government for this business from some Boston merchants. Last year, when I was at Halifax, I saw among the Nova Scotia archives the accounts of these merchants against the government of Nova Scotia for the expenses of carrying off the Acadians. I took a copy of one or two, which I will show you some day.

“The Acadians were thus in a moment snatched from their pleasant homes in this beautiful country, and separated from one another, and packed in small schooners, and carried far away, — some to Massachusetts, some to New York, some to Philadelphia, some to Virginia, and some to the Carolinas. What the Acadians of Grand Pré suffered, all suffered. They were carried away, and scattered all over the Atlantic coast. A few found their way back. But most of them lived and died in exile; and there were friends divided, and husbands and wives severed, and families scattered, never to meet again on earth, but to wear out their lives in a foreign land, with the loss of all that was most dear. But what’s the use of enlarging on this? If you want to know more about it, go and read Longfellow’s *Evangeline*.”

The doctor ceased. The boys were silent, and in that silence the thoughts of all wandered sadly over that past, when these shores and these waters witnessed the mournful expulsion of the Acadians.

XIII.

Plunging into the Depths of the primeval Forest. — Over Rock, Bush, and Brier. — A toilsome March. — The Barrens. — Where are we? — General Bewilderment of the Wanderers. — The Doctor has lost his Way. — Emerging suddenly at the Edge of a giant Cliff with the Boom of the Surf beneath.

T length the doctor rose, and the boys all followed him to the carriages. Getting in, they drove a short distance; and here the doctor informed them that he was going to leave the horses and carriages. "We'll take to the woods now," said he, "and you must prepare for a good, long, steady tramp. We'll want a few things, though, to take with us. Two spades will be enough, one hammer, and an empty basket. You may divide these among yourselves. Each of you had better take some sandwiches out of that basket, and anything else you may think necessary to keep you up on your expedition."

The boys went off, at this, to lay in a stock of provisions. As they expected to be on the move

all day, each one took enough to last him. The spades, &c., they divided among themselves, with the understanding that, when those who first carried them grew tired, they should be relieved by the others. The horses and wagons were left in charge of the people of the house, with whom the doctor had some acquaintance.

After these preliminaries the doctor warned the boys that he intended to plunge boldly into the woods. Some friends of his had formerly gone over the woods to the right, which extended towards Cape Blomidon, but had found nothing. He had made up his mind that if the fort were anywhere, it would be found among the woods on the left, and here was the country which he intended to explore.

They then started, the doctor taking the lead, and soon turned into the woods. They entered a rough pathway, which had been formed by ox teams in winter while hauling out lumber and cord wood. It was now about nine o'clock.

After a time the pathway divided into several others, one of which the doctor chose, and went on, but soon found that it wound away in a direction that did not suit him. He walked on a little farther, and then, coming to place where the woods were less dense, he turned aside, and, with all his followers at his back, plunged into the primeval forest.

At first the walking was not difficult, the trees

standing far apart, and the soil beneath being covered with moss and long ferns; but after a time the woods grew denser, and it was only with considerable effort that they were able to move along. Every step seemed to make it worse. Long, slender trees shot up, not large enough to prevent their progress, but sufficient to form an impediment; and working their way among these proved very difficult, and very fatiguing. What was worse, the ground began to grow rougher at every step. Soon they emerged from the thick underbrush, and came to where the trees were larger, and farther apart from one another. But here the ground was spongy; and in every direction lay fallen trunks of trees, some prostrated but lately, others lying where they had lain for years, in every stage of decay. These they had to clamber over, or crawl under; and so it was that, in order to make any progress, they were compelled to use their hands as well as their feet. The soil beneath was hidden under a covering of moss; but it was swampy and spongy, and the soft earth was interlaced with long, fibrous roots, in which their feet caught at every other step. This moss overspread everything. It grew over the fallen trees; it enfolded in its green mantle the huge granite boulders that from time to time upreared themselves beneath the trees.

At length they came to a slight rise in the ground, where the soil was dryer. Here the doctor paused, and the boys all flung themselves down

on the ground, breathing heavily. They had walked for two hours now, without stopping, and began to feel exhausted. The doctor also showed signs of exhaustion. He said nothing, however, but scanned very narrowly the scene around him.

He found but little before his eyes that was in any way different from what he had been looking at for the last two hours. He could see a few paces before him, but no farther. There the trees arose, and the prospect terminated in the dim aisles of the forest, with their shadowy vistas. All around — before, behind, and on either side — it was the same. There was the dense forest, just such a forest as they had traversed — it spread all around them. The only place where a view could be had for any distance was overhead.

But even here it was no better. For the boys, as they flung themselves down, saw that during their journey a change had taken place overhead. The blue sky was no longer to be seen. In its place there came close down a dull, gray, indistinct haze, which descended even to where they lay, hiding the tree tops from view.

It was the fog.

Such a common circumstance elicited no surprise, of course. It was no more than might have been expected. The wind had changed, and the fog of the Bay of Fundy had rushed over Blomidon, and they, in those dim woods, were now enveloped in its folds. Nor was it so much a matter of

regret to them as it might have been under other circumstances. Here in the woods it made but little difference in their situation. Even if the sun were shining brightly overhead, the ground beneath would be just as swampy, the fallen trees as troublesome, the underbrush as thick.

Whatever were the doctor's own private feelings, he kept them to himself, and surveyed the scene in silence. At length he made up his mind as to his course, and once more started for his onward journey.

The journey was the same as before. Sometimes a great growth of underbrush would impede their progress, and that underbrush would vary from the tall, slender stems of the young maples to the dense and prickly spines of the young spruces. At other times the trees would stand apart, the scene would expand, and they would be encircled by a dense array of forest columns, between which the view was lost in shadow and gloom. Sometimes they plunged into swamps, unawares; at other times they tore their way through ferns and trailing plants; again they were compelled to climb over fallen trees, or crawl under them. Once they came to a place which was quite bare of trees, but overgrown with fireweed and blueberries. Such places as these were known to them by the name of "Barrens," and on this occasion they made use of it to take a long rest. The doctor again looked all around him thoughtfully, and appeared buried in profound reflection.

It was here that a thought flashed to the minds of all the boys.

It was this.

The doctor hadn't the least idea where he was !

The moment that thought arose, every act of the doctor's confirmed it. His silence was a very remarkable thing. Usually he was genial and lively ; and such was his flow of spirits, that he could always throw an air of joyousness around an occasion like this. Usually he was full of pleasant and encouraging words. He had, by nature, a rare aptitude for winning the affection and confidence of boys by throwing himself into their feelings. With all his attainments, he had in him much of that fresh, brave, frank, joyous, hilarious temper which we call "boyish;" and his own free and frank nature, his generous enthusiasm, his disdain for all that was base, his exultation in all that was noble and pure, all combined to win the reverential affection of "his boys," as he called them.

But now he had been silent for hours. During all that weary march he had spoken no word of encouragement. His pleasant, cheery voice, which might have lightened half their toil, had not been heard. His face was anxious, his gaze abstracted. What in the world could be the cause of this? This was the question that came to all ; and all felt that one thing, and one thing only, could in any way account for this.

The doctor had lost his way !

Such was the general conclusion.

But what was to be done? None of them could direct him aright. All were alike in the dark as to their possible position. The sky was not visible. There were no landmarks by which to be guided. Even the sight of the sun would have been a guide; but the sun was now shut out from their view by a dense veil of ever-increasing fog.

The doctor remained for a long time lost in his own thoughts, and this time of rest was precious to the overworn boys. They talked in low tones with one another as to where they might be. None could throw any light on this question. Every one had a different opinion. None could even suggest any reliable way of finding out what they wished to know. But at any rate the time of rest was precious to them all; and when at length the doctor called to them to start once more, they followed him with new vigor in their limbs.

The doctor now crossed the "Barrens," and changed his direction somewhat to the right. They entered the woods again, and once more encountered the old struggle against swamps, and ferns, and underbrush, and tangled roots, and fallen trees. The journey this time seemed harder than before. The boys began to feel their exhaustion more keenly. They exchanged words of despondency, and declared to one another that they could not hold out much longer. Their progress was much slower than it had formerly been, for the doctor

himself began to feel the effects of such unusual and such excessive exertion. He led them forward, therefore, quite slowly, and stopped to rest at times.

What made it worse for the boys was the fact that all this time they had to carry the shovels and other things. There were four of these, viz., two spades, one hammer, and one basket. These the boys carried by turns; but the trouble of carrying them under such circumstances was intolerable. Sometimes they proposed to one another to drop them; but this proposal was not carried out. They still bore them on, and exchanged their burdens more rapidly as they grew more weary.

At last the woods grew thinner, the ground dryer, and the trees smaller. The walking was much easier. The necessity of such very violent exertion was taken off.

This ground formed a gentle declivity, where the woods in front, though much thinner than those behind, still shut out the view. Gradually these woods grew less and less dense, until at last immediately in front they could look through and see beyond the signs of some opening.

And now the ground began to descend more steeply. Where they were going none could tell. Some thought that they were approaching a clearing, for every step made the opening in front more and more plain. Through the trees there was nothing visible, indeed, but the gray, foggy at-

mosphere; yet this itself showed them that they were about to emerge from the woods; where, or in what part of the country, they could not imagine. Some of them thought that they were approaching a settlement, and rejoiced in the prospect of getting upon a road, or finding a house where they might rest. Others thought that they were descending the slope of the mountain towards Cornwallis, and were hoping every moment to emerge forth from the woods into some green meadow or pleasant pasture. Whatever hope they might have had, its effect on all of them was the same. They forgot their fatigue; new strength came to their wearied limbs. The doctor advanced faster, and the boys, in their eagerness, even hurried ahead of him. Bruce and Bart were first among the hurrying throng.

And now the ground descended still more steeply, and in front the gray mist spread out more widely; but one or two trees yet intervened. Forward rushed Bart and Bruce. After them hurried all the others.

But what was this?

Suddenly they all stopped, and sprang back a pace or two.

For they had reached almost the outside edge of the forest, but only to find that the gray mist before them was floating free in the sky, and that the skirt of the forest was the edge of a

tremendous precipice, which went sheer down below them, to a place where the wild sea waves, hidden from them by the mist, sent up a long, low, distant, booming sound, as they broke in thunder on the shore.

XIV.

Woods, Precipices, Mists, and Ocean Waves. — The Party divided, and each Half departs to seek its separate Fortune. — Pat shows how to go in a straight Line. — Pat and the Porcupine. — In Chase after Pat. — Disappearance of Pat. — A lost Pat. — Wanderings in Search of the Lost.



HEY stood for a while confounded.

Before them nothing could be seen but the impenetrable fog. The water beneath was not visible, but the surf sent up its boom, and they knew that they were somewhere on the shore of the Bay of Fundy.

But where?

"This is certainly a most extraordinary thing!" cried the doctor, at last.

The others said nothing, but by their silence assented to the truth of this undeniable statement.

"One thing is evident," said the doctor again, "and that is, that this is not the old French fort. In fact, I begin to doubt whether there is any old French fort here at all. They surely would never have been mad enough to build any kind of a fort in these abominable woods."

To this, again, the boys made no reply. The assertion seemed so self-evident that it appeared like the utterance of actual fact.

"It is a conviction," resumed the doctor, "that has been growing stronger and stronger ever since we left the 'Barrens,' and I now accept it without reserve. But at the same time, boys, I confess that I haven't the smallest idea where we are."

"We must be somewhere on the coast between Scott's Bay and Hall's Harbor," said Bruce.

"Perfectly true," said the doctor; "but where on that coast? As some ten or fifteen miles lie between those two places, we have an almost unlimited latitude for conjecture."

Nothing was said for some time. All looked along the coast line in both directions, to see if anything were visible. Nothing, however, could be seen. The dense fog concealed everything from view.

"Well," said the doctor, "we shall have to do something; that's evident. Now, you're all very tired, and so am I. Let us sit here and rest, and debate which way we had better turn."

They all sat down on the slope, and, looking at their watches, they found that it was half past two o'clock.

"We haven't much time to lose; that's plain," said the doctor, as he looked at his watch. "Let us try, first of all, to find out where we are. In the first place, I think, all things considered, that

we came in a pretty straight line. I tried to guide myself by the tree-tops as I went, and I think our course was as straight as possible."

The boys all thought so, too.

"Yes," said the doctor, "I'm quite positive about that. It was in my mind all the time to keep a perfectly straight course. If it hadn't been for that, our way would have been easier. But I had decided on the position of the old French fort, and had marked it on my map. So, on starting, I took my bearings, and kept on by the trees, keeping as straight a course as possible. You observed how attentive I was to that. That was the reason why I had so few words of encouragement for my patient young friends who were toiling after me, and for whom I felt exceedingly sorry all the time."

"O, doctor," said Bart, "we're all right, — we only hope that you will stand it."

"Well, let us keep up our spirits," said the doctor, cheerily, "and we'll come out all right yet. So, you see, we may consider that our course has been a fair one. And now I will make a rough map of our position."

Saying this, the doctor took his memorandum-book and drew his "rough map." He marked a rough outline for the coast between Scott's Bay and Hall's Harbor. Then he drew the roads which ran from each of these places across the North Mountain to Cornwallis; and finally he traced a straight line from the place where they had started,

in the direction which he supposed that they had gone. The result was, that he made their present position close by Hall's Harbor. After finishing this, he handed it to the boys, who inspected it very closely.

"Well," said the doctor, "what do you think of it?"

They were silent for some time. At length Bruce spoke.

"The only thing against it, sir," said he, "is, that our course may not have been so perfectly straight."

"But then," said the doctor, "I took particular care, and always kept several trees in line before me, so as to go straight."

"Still, sir," said Bruce, "travelling in the woods is a very peculiar thing. I've done it often. I've lived for weeks in the woods, camping out; and it's always been my experience that a man can't go straight, unless he has a compass, or at least some general landmarks. An Indian might, perhaps; but I'm sure I couldn't."

The doctor seemed quite impressed by this.

"Well, Bruce," said he, "I know you have had far more experience in the woods than I can pretend to, and I should like very much to get your opinion without reserve."

"You see, sir," said Bruce, "everybody has a tendency, in the woods, to lean to the right. It's the same, I've heard, on the western prairies. I

don't pretend to know the cause of it. I only know it's so. This makes one go in a kind of curved line, so that if one wanders long enough he'll perform a sort of circle. I know once, in Cape Breton, I actually came back to the place I started from, and all the time I thought I was miles away. I took great pains, too, to walk straight; and it was a better country than this. Now we've been working our way through all kinds of places. We've been in thick underbrush, where, for my part, I don't see how it was possible to keep a straight course. We've had to go round rocks and fallen trees. After breaking a straight course by making such a circuit, however small, it seems to me almost impossible to take it up again. A slight mistake at the outset makes a great difference by the time you get to the journey's end."

"Well," said the doctor, "where do you think we may be? Point out on the map the place."

"I can't do that," said Bruce, "of course. I can only say that I think we've been, as usual, swerving to the right; and if so, we are now really much nearer to Scott's Bay than we are to Hall's Harbor."

The doctor now sat thinking for some time.

"There's a great deal in what you say, Bruce," said he, at length, "and I'm very glad you've given your opinion. At the same time I feel quite confident that, if I have swerved to the right, it cannot have been to any great extent. The care which

I took was so extreme, that my calculations cannot be much out of the way. I dare say I may have lost my course a little while going through the thick underbrush, but I'm convinced that I found it again pretty correctly. Now I will mark out a new track on the map, and make allowance for any deviation from a true course."

Saying this, the doctor traced a new line, which curved slightly to the right, and made their present position somewhat farther away from Hall's Harbor than the former conjecture had made it. Still this new estimate made them much nearer to Hall's Harbor than to Scott's Bay.

He showed this to Bruce, and asked him what he thought of it.

"Well, sir," said Bruce, "I will only say that if I had headed the party, with all my care, I should be very much farther to the right than you make it."

"So you think that we are now nearer to Scott's Bay than to Hall's Harbor?"

"Very much nearer, sir," said Bruce.

The doctor said no more, but sat for a long time silently regarding his map.

"Well," said he, at last, "it seems to me to be a fair question. You, Bruce, have had very much experience in the woods; but then I rely on my own correctness. On the whole, I think it would be better for us now to divide ourselves into two parties. One party could go in the direction of

Hall's Harbor, the other towards Scott's Bay. As you are an old hand in the woods, Bruce, I consider you quite fit to head one party, and try Scott's Bay. For my part, I will take another party, and make for Hall's Harbor. What do you say to that?"

"O, no, sir," said Bruce; "we won't leave you. We'll stay with you, and follow you wherever you go."

The doctor laughed.

"O, nonsense!" said he. "If we were wandering in the forests of the Amazon valley, we might then make it a matter of duty to stand by one another; but these woods are only a small affair. By going in any direction, we must emerge from them before very long. Even if we were overtaken by the darkness, it would be no great hardship to pass the night here. We could make comfortable beds out of spruce boughs and fern. To tell the truth, roughing it in the bush has rather an attraction for me than otherwise; and I know your weakness, boys, in that respect. Besides, in two hours, at the very farthest, we're sure to come out somewhere. If I thought that there was any danger, I would not think of separating you, but would guard you as carefully as possible. The most that can happen is some little inconvenience. So, Bruce, you may consider yourself the commander of the Scott's Bay party. Who will be your followers?"

"I," said Bart, whose hesitation had been driven away by the doctor's words.

"I," said Arthur.

"And I," said Tom.

"And I," said Phil.

"Bedad, thin, an it's meself that'll jine that same," said Pat, who preferred the comparative freedom that he would enjoy under Bruce to the restraint which he felt with the doctor. For the doctor, who, with the other boys, was a great favorite, and had won all their hearts by that boyish enthusiasm which age could never extinguish in him, and by his evident fellow-feeling and sympathy with them in all their joys and sorrows, was not so well known to Pat, and, in spite of his kindness to the poor Irish boy, still remained an object of grateful affection certainly, but yet one of extreme awe. So Pat elected to go with Bruce.

The other boys preferred taking their chance with the doctor. These were Jiggins, Bogud, Sammy, Johnny, and Billymack. Thus the party was about equally divided, — five going under the command of Bruce, and five under the command of the doctor. By the time these arrangements were completed it was three o'clock. They all felt refreshed by their rest, and inspirited also by the prospect of getting onward out of the woods into some road, or some settlement.

"If I reach Hall's Harbor," said the doctor, "I will get horses, and drive at once to where we left

our wagons. If you get to the Scott's Bay road, go back to that place and wait for me."

With these words the doctor and his party set off in one direction, while Bruce started away with his followers in another. As the trees were farther apart near the edge of the cliff, he walked along here for some time; but at last finding that the line was irregular, and coming to a place where it ran out into a kind of promontory, he kept on, seeking only to find the easiest place for walking. For a long time he tried to keep in a line with what he supposed to be the direction of the coast; but at length he found himself away from it altogether. He then turned, determined to regain it, but found the way so difficult that he gave it up.

"The fact is, boys," said he, "our only chance was to keep stolidly along the edge of the cliff, and follow all its windings. We've lost it now. There are two things for us to do — either to get back to the cliff again at all hazards, or to keep on through the woods as we are going now. One is the safer way, but the other is easier."

"O, bother the cliff," said Bart; "we're doing very well. I don't care, for my part, whether we're lost or not. I'd just as soon camp out. The only trouble is, we haven't anything to eat. We've eaten all our sandwiches. And then these miserable spades. I don't see why they couldn't have taken them. But no — Jiggins and Bogud insisted on taking the hammer and the basket, and they call that a fair division!"

"I'm of Bart's opinion," said Arthur. "I say, let's go where it is easiest, and trust to luck. And let's all take care of our right legs, and not let them drag us into a circle."

"No, that won't do," said Bruce; "if you try to guard against turning to the right, you'll be sure to turn too much to the left. It's impossible to go straight unless you're an Indian. Best to walk as straight as you can, and occasionally change your course so as to correct any deviation."

"Why not walk zigzag?" said Phil.

"Or backwards?" said Tom.

"I'll tell you," said Pat, "what we'd ort till do. Let's howld a sthraight powl before ourselves, an follow it. That'll be sure till take us sthraight."

A roar of laughter greeted this proposal.

"Very well, Pat; get your pole and try it," said Bart.

"'Deed an I jist will," said Pat; and seeing a young, slender maple near by, he cut it down with his knife, lopped off the young twigs, and thus formed a long, slender, straight pole. Taking this in his hand, he gravely put himself at the head of the party. Then he held out the pole. "There," said he; "isn't this powl sthraight?"

"Of course it is," said they.

"Then sure, an if we go by it, we must go sthraight, too," said Pat. And saying this, he started off, holding the pole before him.

The boys followed in great glee, almost bursting

with laughter, while Pat led them on with his pole, with an expression of ineffable satisfaction, holding the pole straight before him.

So they went on, and Bruce, out of pure enjoyment of the thing, let Pat lead wherever he wished.

At last Pat gave a wild yell, leaped forward, and slashed violently with his pole at something.

The boys crowded up.

The something at which Pat had struck had got under some fern leaves, and was not visible. But Pat slashed away bravely in all directions. Suddenly there came running out a queer little animal, all covered with sharp spines. It did not run very fast, and Bart, who carried a spade, could easily have killed it. But he did not. He stood still, and let it run close by him. Pat had lost sight of it for a moment, and was looking in all directions for it, when suddenly he caught sight of it. With a wild yell he rushed after it, swinging his pole and slashing it madly against the ground. The little animal dodged under some blueberry bushes; and while Pat was slashing at these, it escaped and ran into a hollow tree which lay on the ground. Into this Pat poked his pole; but as he poked it in at one end, the little animal ran out from the other, and hurried away as fast as his little legs would carry him.

Again Pat caught sight of him, and gave chase.

Meanwhile the other boys had not interfered. They left it all to Pat. They also felt a sort of

sympathy with the poor little creature, and gave it all their best wishes in its efforts to escape. Phil, as well as Bart, might have despatched it with the spade that he happened just then to be carrying; but he would not: so the little thing ran off, and Pat followed after it, turning and winding in all directions. The boys then went off after Pat, so as to keep him in sight; but before long they lost him altogether. They went forward to the last place where they had seen him, and began to shout for him.

There was no answer, however.

They shouted again and again, and waited a long time for some response. They began to be anxious about him. Where had he gone? He was chasing that little animal, and in the excitement of the chase had forgotten everything. It was getting late, and there was no time now for chasing anything. They ought to be moving on, and trying to get to Scott's Bay. But they could not do so till they had found Pat.

They wandered along, calling in every possible kind of way, and waiting, after every call, to see if there would be any response. But no response came. They kept on in the way in which they supposed Pat had gone, and shouted, and screamed, and halloed, and yelled, and whistled, and made every noise that could be made. But their utmost efforts proved of no avail; and all their shouts excited no response, except the echoes that reverberated through the long, dim forest aisles.

At length they gave up.

"Well, what are we to do now?" said Bruce.

"Pat's off — that's certain," said Bart; "and how we can find him again is more than I can tell."

"There isn't any danger, of course. He'll work his way along; but still he belongs to our party, and I don't like the idea of leaving him."

"We'd better keep on quietly, as we were going," said Arthur. "There's no use for us to stand still. This seems to be the direction in which he was going."

"Yes," said Tom; "let's go on. We haven't any time to lose. It's six o'clock now."

They went on.

They hadn't the faintest idea now where they were. Whatever general notion of their course they had kept up, while first following Pat, had now been altogether lost. His chase after the little animal had been a very eccentric one, and they had faced in several different directions while pursuing him. The monotonous woods gave no sign by which they might learn their course. They could not find their way now even to the place where Pat had been seized with his strange frenzy. The fact is, they were utterly and hopelessly lost.

"It seems to me," said Arthur, "that we're going to Hall's Harbor."

"No," said Phil; "we're steering straight for Cornwallis."

"Not a bit of it," said Tom. "We're going to Scott's Bay."

"It's my opinion," said Bart, "that we're on our way to the cliff; and as its getting dark, we'd better be careful. Bruce, if you get to the cliff first, and fall over in the dark, just let us know before you go down. I wouldn't care so much in fine, bright weather, but I have a prejudice against tumbling over cliffs on a foggy night."

"You needn't trouble yourself," said Bruce. "We'll never come near a cliff, or anything else. I know all about it. We're wandering in a circle. We'll camp in the woods to-night, and to-morrow night, after wandering all day, we'll get back to the same place. I move, therefore, that we stop now in this place, and build a good, solid camp, that will serve for a shelter every night after our circular wanderings."

"Well," said Bart, "we won't begin just yet. I want to get to the cliff."

"I want to get to Scott's Bay," said Tom.

"I'm determined," said Phil, "to get to Cornwallis."

"Pooh!" said Arthur. "Every one of us will sleep to-night in Hall's Harbor. Come along, boys."

XV.

All lost. — The gathering Gloom of Fog and of Night. — Sudden Discovery. — The lost One found. — A Turkey with four Legs. — A cheerful Discussion. — Five Hours of Wandering. — When will it end? — Once more upon the Tramp.

HEY went on.

The shades of evening were now coming down rapidly, and these were all intensified by the dense fog that hung around them. The woods grew more and more obscure, and the gloom that prevailed here was added to that of the twilight and the fog. It was evident that they could not go on much longer.

Fortunately, it was not so difficult now as it had been previously. The trees stood farther apart than usual. There was but little underbrush. The ground was covered with moss, but it was quite dry. This was encouraging, for if they tried to pass the night in the woods, they could not find a better place than the one which they were traversing. They would probably have given up, and decided upon making preparations for the night, had it not been for their desire to find Pat. If he had

been with them, their journey for that night would have ended. But they did not like to think of him alone, severed from them, and wandering in the woods. So they kept on their way; and still, as they went along, they shouted occasionally, with some vague hope that their cry might come to the ears of the wanderer.

It grew darker and darker.

At last they began to think of halting for the night. Pat was given up. They comforted themselves with the thought that he was hardy, and fearless, and self-reliant; that the nights were mild; and that spruce boughs abounded, together with ferns and moss, on which one might sleep peacefully and pleasantly. So, as it grew darker, they talked of stopping, and making their preparations for the night before it grew too dark.

Suddenly, as they were talking over these things, they saw before them through the trees, yet not more than a dozen paces distant, a very familiar form. It was a "snake fence," — that is to say, a fence formed of poles, built in such a way that it runs in a zigzag direction. At once the thought flashed upon them that they were near some farmhouse, perhaps some settlement; and then arose the hope of a better night's rest than could be afforded by the woods with their damp and foggy atmosphere. With a cry of joy they rushed forward. They reached it. They looked over. In a moment the cry of joy was succeeded by one of surprise.

It was a road which lay before them.

Yes, a road, wide and well travelled, — not a private path to some small cottage, not an ox-path through dense woods, but a regular road fit for carriages, and evidently leading to some settlement.

But what settlement?

In a moment they had clambered over the fence, and stood in the road with one common determination in all of them not to leave it again for any woods whatsoever.

Yet what road was this? and where did it go?

This was the question.

And this question it was not possible to answer.

Had they continued on uninterruptedly, Bruce would have been convinced that it was the Scott's Bay road. But their digression after Pat had led them such a journey, that he was not by any means sure; nor were any of the others. All felt that they had been wandering blindly, that after leaving the cliff they had no certainty as to their destination. This uncertainty had been increased by Pat's leadership with the pole, and had been turned into utter and hopeless perplexity by their last pursuit of him. They had been wandering now, since they parted with Dr. Porter, for more than four hours. That gave time enough for them to get anywhere. It might be the road to Hall's Harbor in which they now found themselves.

In this state of uncertainty they remained for some time.

“ Well, boys,” said Bruce, at last, “ it’s impossible to tell where we are ; but, in my opinion, we’d better take it for granted that this is the Scott’s Bay road. It’s more likely, after all, to be that than the Hall’s Harbor road. If it is, we have to find our way back to where the wagons are, according to the doctor’s directions, and wait there for him. Now, if this is the Scott’s Bay road, we must turn to the right, in order to go back, for on the left it goes to Scott’s Bay. So, I say, let’s turn up the road to the right, and walk back to the wagons.”

Bruce’s opinion was accepted by the others, and his decision at once adopted. They all turned up the road to the right, and walked onward, not knowing how far they would have to walk, yet feeling greatly inspired by the mere fact that they were out of the woods.

As they went on, it grew darker and darker at every step. The sun had gone down, the shadows of night were descending, and these shadows were all deepened by the universal fog which covered all things. The deepening gloom made their own escape from the woods appear all the more fortunate. True, they might have built a fire there, to cheer themselves by its light, and spread soft beds of moss and fern around it, and thus, even amid the forest, they could have risen superior to their dismal surroundings ; but still there was a very great relief, which was felt by all, at their gaining a road

which might lead them to some human abode. Besides, they were hungry. They had eaten all their sandwiches, and were eager for something to assuage their ravenous appetites.

One thing there was, however, which greatly marred their joy, and that was the thought of poor Pat. Perhaps he still was wandering in the woods, having given up his chase, calling for them, and thinking that they had deserted him. The thought of poor Pat's loneliness was a sad one to all of them, and they could only find consolation in their belief in his perfect ability to take care of himself. At books he might not be very brilliant, but in all the practical matters of life Pat was certainly in every way worthy of being left entirely to himself. Under such circumstances, Pat was able to shine with uncommon brilliancy. In all probability, he would fare better if left to his own devices, than he would if he were a member of a crowd of school-boys. With such thoughts as these they comforted themselves, and thus tried to overcome their anxiety about Pat.

They had walked about half a mile after leaving the woods, when they saw a figure approaching them. It was not far away when they first noticed that figure, and it appeared strangely familiar.

They came nearer and nearer. The familiar outlines of the approaching figure grew more and more distinct. At last the figure came close up to them, and then suspicions became a delightful certainty.

Yes ! It was no other than Pat himself !

A wild uproar of cheers and voluble questionings greeted the returning wanderer.

"When did you get out of the woods?" they asked.

"Whin, is it? Sure it wor ony five minutes ago."

"Where are you going?"

"Where, is it? Sure I'm goin back till the 'Cad'my."

"The Academy? Pooh! you're going straight away from it. Come along with us. Didn't you hear us calling you?"

"Callin me? Niver a call did I hear."

"Why, we followed you, and yelled, and shouted, and halloed, and hooted, and screamed, and bawled, and roared, and squalled, and whistled, and crowed, and croaked, and made every noise that we could make. We gave up everything to find you. It was only by chance that we found the road. We have just been talking about you. We were thinking about going into the woods again a little way, and shouting. But where's your pole, and what's become of the animal that you were chasing?"

"Sure an it's the mischief itsilf intirely. Niver did I see such a baste. I chased it, an chased it, an it dodged, an I thought I sthruke it a hundred times; but the little baste got off afther all, so it did."

"So you didn't catch it."

"Catch it? Niver a catch. It tuk me up into a place that I couldn't get out of fur half an hour. I lost me pole, an gave up. I couldn't find a sign of it, an I wandhered about, whin all av a suddint, I found mesilf by the road. An be the powers! it wor mesilf that wor glad till find that same. The dirty little baste that wudn't let itsilf be caught, like a Christian!"

"What dirty little baste?"

"Why, the wild turkey."

"Wild turkey! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wild duck, thin."

"Wild duck!" cried the boys; and another laugh followed.

"Well, thin, it wor a wild goose, ony it had fower legs, so it had — whatever it wor."

At this very remarkable description the boys' laughter burst forth afresh.

"Well," said Pat, "what wor it, thin? — wor it a bayver?"

"No," said Bart, "nor a moose, either."

"What wor it, thin?" cried Pat. "Niver did I behowld anythin like it. It had fower legs, so it had; an it had long spikes all over its back. Was it any kind of a rabbit, thin?"

"It was a porcupine," said Arthur. "Haven't you ever seen any of them?"

"Pooh!" said Bart. "Pat, look here. I'll tell you really what it was. It was the real, identical, original, bona fide ghost, that howls and knocks in

the Academy garret. *You* ought to have known it at once. I did, the moment I saw it."

"Ah, blatheration take ye, wid yer ghosts, an yer howls," said Pat, peevishly. "An what wor that ye said?" he asked, turning to Arthur. "What wor the name av the little baste that ye mintioned jest now, thin?"

"A porcupine," said Arthur.

"Porkypine!" said Pat. "Porkypine! Well, it wor a strange baste intirely. I thried hard to get him. It ud have been a swate baste fur the Musayum, so it wud. But I cudn't get a howld av him, bad luck to him!"

"It's lucky for you, Pat," said Bart, "that you didn't get hold of him. He's got spikes enough about his back to stick you through and through, if you put your hand on him. You've got off very easily, Pat. You ought to say good luck to him."

"Sure an it's mesilf that niver, niver saw the aqual av that baste, so I didn't. I hit him mesilf wid me powl a dozen cracks — yes, a hundhred; but niver a bit did he budge for all that same. He didn't let out ayven a squake, so he didn't. An me a chasin av him over the wuds! But I cudn't get nair him."

"O, well, Pat, it's all right," said Bruce. "You ought to be glad you didn't get near him. You'd have been laid up for a couple of months if you had. If you don't understand porcupines, you'd better steer clear of them. They're not very

pleasant beasts to handle. I know that. But come, boys. It's getting darker and darker. We mustn't stand dawdling here all night. Hurry up, and come along."

Saying this, Bruce strode forward, and all the boys followed.

XVI.

Sudden and unaccountable Reunion of the two wandering Bands. — A tremendous Circle described by Somebody. — Where are we going? Scott's Bay, or Hall's Harbor. — Descent into the Plain. — Twinkling Lights. — Sudden Sound of Sea Surf breaking in the Middle of a Prairie.

ND now every moment it grew darker and darker. It was about eight o'clock. The sun had gone down, the shadows of night were gathering, and the fog seemed thicker than ever. As they walked on they could see but a few paces before them.

They supposed themselves to be going in the direction of the house where the wagons were left; but, after all, they were not quite sure of the way. It might be some other road altogether. They had been over the Scott's Bay road once or twice before, but it would not have been familiar even by daylight, while in such gloom as this, no road, however familiar, could be recognized. As they went they peered anxiously through the gloom, in hopes of seeing cultivated fields, or houses. But nothing of

the kind appeared to their anxious eyes. They also looked forward with straining eyes, and listened with the closest attention, in hopes of meeting with some people who might make them acquainted with their actual position. But nothing could be either seen or heard in front, and so they had nothing else to do than to walk on as quickly as their wearied limbs would allow.

At length they heard the sound of voices ahead, and footsteps, which seemed to approach them. They stood and waited. Soon a number of figures appeared, rendered gigantic by the mist and darkness. The boys hurried towards them, and Bruce at once addressed the foremost figure.

The foremost figure at the same instant addressed Bruce.

And both asked exactly the same question, or rather part of what would evidently have been the same question if it had been finished.

It was, —

Bruce. “Will you be kind enough to tell me —”

Foremost Figure. “Will you have the goodness to tell me —”

Here the questions broke off abruptly.

And turned to, —

Bruce. “Hallo!”

Foremost Figure. “Why! What’s this!”

Bruce. } “Dr. Porter!!!”

Foremost Figure. } “Bruce Rawdon!!!”

For a few moments both parties were over-

whelmed with utter bewilderment and a total prostration of all their faculties. This amazing and incomprehensible reunion of those who had parted five hours ago in the wild woods, by the lofty precipice and the thundering surf, going in exactly opposite directions, yet coming together in darkness and fog, was a thing which might well reduce them to complete stupefaction.

Then there arose a general uproar of questions, each party asking the other where they had been, and where they supposed themselves to be now, and where they thought they were going.

"This is a most incomprehensible thing!" said the doctor.

"How long have you been on the road, sir?"

"Not over a quarter of an hour."

"Have you been in the woods all the time?"

"Yes, walking steadily in this direction."

"And could you manage to keep a straight course?"

"O, yes."

"You didn't walk along the cliff—did you, sir?"

"O, no."

"I don't see how you managed to go on straight when you were in the woods."

"O, I managed by my eye," said the doctor, calmly. "I also tried to correct that tendency to swerve to the right that you spoke of, and I think I succeeded. You see, I found I was very much farther away from Hall's Harbor than I supposed.

In fact, your conjecture must have been right, and we were nearer Scott's Bay by a great deal than we were to Hall's Harbor. We had swerved very much to the right. As I went on I became convinced of this, and tried constantly and most carefully to guard against it. I succeeded therefore in going almost in a perfectly straight line. But our march was a very fatiguing one, I must confess. It grew dark, too, and we were just on the point of giving up, when we came to a pasture field, and then found the road. We didn't see any houses near, and couldn't find how far away any house might be. At first I thought of going to Hall's Harbor, but finally I concluded to turn to the left, and go on towards Cornwallis. But you, how did you happen to lose your course so completely? Why, you've made a complete circle. You must have been turning to the right ever since you left. You've got into the Hall's Harbor road, and are now walking straight towards Hall's Harbor. What a most extraordinary and most absurd situation! I wouldn't have believed this to be possible, had it not been first for my own mistake to-day, and now for this one of yours. But it seems to me, Bruce, that your circle has been more complete than mine was. What a tremendous march you must have made!"

Bruce for a few minutes said nothing. The doctor's quiet way of informing him about his situation bewildered him more than the first dis-

covery had done. A "tremendous" circuit it must indeed have been. How had they managed to go so fast, and reach the road before the doctor's party? It must have been that chase after Pat which put them astray. After that they had lost all idea of their way, and had wandered on blindly, not knowing where they were going, and for that matter not caring very much, either.

"But are you sure that this is the Hall's Harbor road?" he asked at length.

"Why, yes — of course it is. It ought to be — we've come far enough to get to it. What did you think it was?"

"Why, we thought it was the Scott's Bay road."

"The Scott's Bay road!" cried the doctor, and burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

"Well, sir," said Bruce, "to tell the truth, we got utterly lost. Pat began chasing a porcupine, and we chased Pat, and followed him wherever he went. At last we lost him. So then we didn't think about reaching the road at all, but only about finding him. We went on in the direction which he seemed to have taken, and so we came to this road. It was the porcupine that led us here.

"The porcupine," said the doctor; and he appeared so amused at this idea, that Bruce had to tell him the whole story.

"The fact is," said the doctor, thoughtfully, after

hearing this story, "what you ought to have done is this: You ought at all hazards to have followed the line of the cliff. That would have brought you to Scott's Bay in a little more than an hour. You could then have gone to the house where the horses were left, and by this time you would have been in comfortable quarters, pitying us poor wanderers."

"Well," said Bruce, "we tried to keep close by the cliff, but it ran off in such a direction that we left it, and went in what we thought a truer course."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the doctor. "That is always the way. The cliff was right, but you were wrong. The cliff did not turn away from you, but you turned away from the cliff. It was all that fatal tendency to turn to the right. Now, I was on my guard; but you, who gave me that warning, forgot all about it yourself. But come, it won't do to stand here all night talking. We are now about half way over the mountain. We ought soon to begin to descend towards Cornwallis. There's a man who lives on this road that I'm acquainted with,—a Mr. Smalley,—and his house can't be very far away. We can get something to eat there at least, and accommodations for the night. But I prefer getting wagons and driving over to where we left our own conveyances. However, we can see about that when we get to Smalley's."

The whole party now walked on, and the boys mingled with one another, questioning each other

about the journey. The doctor's party had suffered fearfully. They were all foot-sore, and their clothes were badly torn. They had gone through swamps and brushwood, and over stones and fallen trees. They were fearfully fatigued, and were now only sustained by the prospect of soon reaching the end of their journey. All this was a great puzzle to Bruce's party, who were not nearly so fatigued; and they couldn't understand how they could have gone so much farther than the doctor's party without feeling so worn out as their friends were. They attributed this, however, first to the fact that the doctor had gone in one perfectly straight course, regardless of obstacles; and secondly, to the other fact, that their journey had been beguiled by Pat's adventure with the porcupine, which first afforded them amusement, and afterwards, when he was lost, created such an excitement that they forgot their toils.

After walking some distance farther, the road, to their great delight, began to descend.

"We're going down to Cornwallis," said the doctor, joyously. "We're very much farther on than I supposed. We are evidently far beyond Smalley's. I see how it is. In my anxiety to avoid swerving to the right, I have fallen, as you said, Bruce, into the opposite extreme, and have actually swerved to the left. That accounts for the immense length of our journey. Well, now that it's over, I'm glad that it happened so. It brings us all

the nearer to our destination. At the foot of the hill lives Mr. Atkins, who will give us far better accommodation than Smalley. One mile more, boys, only one mile, and then we'll have rest."

The doctor's encouraging words cheered all the boys, and the fact that they were actually descending the hill, and were thus every moment drawing nearer to their destination, had an additional influence in giving them fresh energy.

So they descended farther and farther, and now kept on the lookout more vigilantly than ever for the welcome lights of some houses.

"It's a long descent," said the doctor, "but every step is bringing us nearer to Atkins's; so keep your courage up, boys, for we'll soon be there now."

On they went, and descended lower and lower, till at last they seemed to have reached the plain, for the road became level, and went on straight, without any more windings.

At length there appeared a faint light not far away on the left.

"That must be Atkins's," said the doctor. "But how very thick the fog is even here! I never knew it so thick in Cornwallis. And the air is just like that of the sea-shore. It is very seldom that it is so on this side of the mountain."

"I suppose it's the strong southerly wind," said Bart.

"Yes, I dare say."

"The wind seems to strike us here from a very odd direction. It must come across the Basin of Minas. It's just as though it came from the east."

"O, we can't tell," said the doctor. "This road winds so that we get it sometimes in our faces, and sometimes in our backs."

"It must be after nine," said Bruce.

"Yes," said the doctor; "and I dare say we've passed several houses on the road. The people here are not very liberal in the use of candles. They sit around the kitchen fire till about nine o'clock, and then go to bed. That's the reason why we have not seen any lights. There must be quite a number of houses along here."

By this time they had come in front of the house. It stood about a dozen yards from the road. The light proceeded from a small, lower window. The house was only a cottage, and the dim outline of a barn could be seen a little farther on.

"This does not look like Atkins's," said the doctor, after he had scanned the cottage and the barn. "Atkins's is very much larger than this, and is a different looking place altogether. I don't think we can have passed it. No, it must be farther on. At any rate, we can ask here, and they can tell us exactly how far we have yet to go. I'm sorry it isn't Atkins's, though, for I fully expected to be there. Besides, we all want rest."

The doctor looked once more at the house, and

then at the barn. As they stood there, thus looking in silence, there came to their ears a very peculiar sound, which made every one start.

It was a long, rolling sound, made up of the rush of many waters, such as can be heard nowhere else but upon the sea-shore — that peculiar noise of gathering floods, such as is heard when the sea throws forth its waves towards the land, to curl up, foaming, and break upon the strand. Here it arose amid this darkness, — that peculiar, that unmistakable sound, — with its gathering waters, its foam, its roll, and its crash as the uplifted waters broke, — the sound that can be made by the surf, and the surf alone.

But what did it mean?

What was the meaning of the surf breaking thus upon the inner side of the North Mountain, far inland, on the plains of Cornwallis?

Were the dikes broken down? Was this some flood pouring in over the country to overwhelm them? Was the raging sea now rolling, in undisturbed possession of its ancient bed, over all the green valleys of this lately smiling plain? Was there the terrific visitation of a deluge here in this peaceful country? and were all the people now flying from the horrors of an inundation?

What did it mean?

Up to this moment there had not been a doubt in the minds of any of them that they were near Atkins's, somewhere in Cornwallis, on the Hall's

Harbor road. The doctor's quiet positiveness, the perfect certainty with which he had spoken, and the minute acquaintance which he seemed to have with every part of their past and present journey, all conspired to impress upon the minds of the boys the very idea of their possible locality which was in his own mind; and thus it happened that it was while they fully believed themselves entering upon a wide plain that they suddenly heard the thunder of the surf upon the shore.

The doctor heard this as plainly as any of them, of course, and all the thoughts which came to them came to him also none the less vividly. But he said not a single word. He stood mute, and waited for a few moments longer, as though doubting the evidence of his senses.

Once more the sound arose. The waters gathered themselves together, they rolled forward, they heaped themselves upward, they foamed, and then they broke upon the shore. Thus, wave after wave, the surf came on, and spoke of the presence of the sea!

It was enough.

"I don't know where in the world we have got to," ejaculated the doctor, at last.

"It can't be Cornwallis," said Bruce.

"We must be on the shore of Minas Basin," said Bogud.

"I think it's Pereau," said Bart.

"I don't know where it is," said the doctor;

“but, Bruce, I shouldn’t be surprised if you should prove right a second time. But the best way is to go and ask.”

Saying this, the doctor hurried to the door of the cottage. As they drew near, a strong smell of fish arose, and formed a new and striking proof of the presence of the sea. Reaching the door, the doctor knocked loudly, and all the boys gathered round to hear the result of his inquiry, and learn their fate.

At first there was no response.

The doctor knocked again.

Footsteps were now heard, and a voice cried out, —

“Who’s there?”

“Friends,” said the doctor. “We’ve lost our way, and want to find it.”

“Go round to the back door; this’n won’t open,” said the voice.

At this they turned away to look for the back door, wondering, as they went, what the occupant of the house supposed a front door was made for. It seemed to them like stories which they had read of some Dutch villages, where the people are so excessively neat that the “front door” and the “best room” are never used except on two great occasions; one being a marriage, and the other a burial. At all other times the back door and the back rooms are used.

So to this back door they tried to work their

way round the house. As they went round, the smell of decayed fish came up more strongly, more overpoweringly, and more impressively than ever. Evidently the people of the cottage had something to do with fish. They either caught them, or traded in them, or cured them. Who were they? Was it Pereau — or was it — what?

Turning the house, the fresh wind came upon them, driving against them the dense fog clouds, and hiding everything before them from view. But through that gloom there swept upon their hearing a recurrence of the solemn boom of the surf which had startled them a few moments before, when they first paused to look at the cottage. There it came, the sound of the gathering waters, rising gradually, breaking, and flinging the roar of the falling waters far away along the shore.

Here they were, then, by the sea; here the surf rolled; here were the signs of fish. Evidently these people were fishermen, and their life was on the ocean wave. Suddenly they encountered some large object which was right **in** their way. Through the gloom they could see the outline of a whaling boat, that is, a boat sharp at both ends, which is often used by fishermen in these waters. This excited no surprise, however. It only confirmed what had been told them by the booming surf and the odors wafted from the decaying fish.

On reaching the rear of the house they found the aforesaid back door wide open, and a man stand-

ing in the doorway, with a candle in one hand and a pipe in the other. The candle flared, and flickered, and sputtered in the wind and fog; and he was blinking through the darkness, and trying to catch a glimpse of his visitors.

He was a short, thick-set, red-faced man, with whiskers running all round in a "sea dog" sort of fashion, checked shirt, and canvas trousers, which bore numerous marks made by tar. His waistcoat was unbuttoned, so as to give free play to the organs of his manly chest. He had no coat, and, for that matter, no boots. In point of fact, he was in his stocking feet. His grizzled hair and beard showed him to belong to the elderly class of mankind; but his stout, sturdy frame and bluff countenance exhibited no decay of strength.

"Lost yer way?" said he, as he caught sight of them. "Wal, come in, any how. We'll talk it over. Walk in, all on ye, the whole fifty of ye, for that matter. Ole Bennie Grigg can find room for ye. Walk in, walk in."

"But where are we?" asked the doctor. "What place is this?"

"What place? Haw, haw, haw! What! don't you even know the place? Haw, haw, haw! Why, this here place is Scott's Bay!"

XVII.

Old Bennie and Mrs. Bennie. — Old-fashioned Hospitality. — What old Bennie was able to spread before his famished Guests. — A Night on a Hay-mow. — A secluded Village. — A Morning Walk. — Behind Time. — Hurrah, Boys !

SCOTT'S BAY !

The emotions of the doctor and all his party, on hearing that name, can better be imagined than described. At first they could scarcely believe it; but finally, seeing that they knew nothing at all about it, and that Bennie Grigg, as he called himself, might be supposed to know where he was living, they were forced to admit the truth of the amazing statement. But Bennie gave them no time for wonder. He forced them all to come in, and ushered them into a large room, where a bright wood fire was blazing upon an ample hearth. Here his wife received the unexpected guests. She was a quiet, quaint, comfortable body, fit helpmeet for Bennie, and received them in the most cordial manner. With the true spirit of hospitality, Bennie forbore from asking

any question, but devoted his whole energies towards making his guests comfortable. He pulled forward an old-fashioned settee, drew forth the quaint, old, high-backed chairs, and soon had a circle of seats arranged around the fire, where all could be accommodated. After this his wife spread the cloth over a large table, and began to make preparations for a repast.

“Ye’ll be fairly starving?” said Bennie to the doctor, interrogatively.

The doctor acknowledged that they were hungry, but begged Bennie not to put himself out. Bread, and butter, and milk were all that they wanted.

At this Bennie laughed, and Mrs. Bennie laughed also, and the latter busied herself in getting ready the repast.

While Mrs. Bennie was thus employed, Mr. Bennie assisted her, and, at the same time, urged his guests to make themselves comfortable. So they talked with one another around the fire, and at length relapsed into silence. The fact is, they were all awfully hungry.

At last the table was spread.

And such a spread!

O, ye farmers of Cornwallis! ye fishermen of Scott’s Bay! Are there, indeed, other farmers and other fishermen on this terrestrial ball that can make extemporaneous spreads like yours? I doubt it.

For here Bennie and his wife spread out

Broiled salmon,
Ham and eggs,
Mealy potatoes,
Cream cheese,
Tea,
Coffee,
Cream,
Apple sauce,
Broiled chicken,
Mince pies,
Apple pies,
Cold corn beef,
Cold roast beef,
Cold fillet of veal,
Fresh bread,
Hot rolls,
Pickles,
Cold ham,
Chow-chow,
Tomato ketchup,
Ginger pop,
Currant wine,
Cranberry preserves,
Plum preserves,
Quince preserves,
Cake,
Bacon,
Smoked herrings,
Alewives,

Finnen haddies,
Salad,
Buckwheat pancakes,
Mushroom ketchup,
Pickled oysters,
Maple honey,
Johnny cakes,

and various other articles of a minor character.

All of which the starving wayfarers attacked with ravenous appetites, while Mr. and Mrs. Bennie looked on with faces that beamed all over with inexpressible gratification.

It was not until the first cravings of hunger were satisfied that Bennie ventured to speak to his guests about their wanderings. The doctor then told him all.

In the full discussion that followed the whole thing was made plain, and their wanderings were all accounted for.

In the first place, it was seen that Bruce's party, in spite of their carelessness, and of their chase after Pat, had actually reached the point at which they had aimed, viz., the Scott's Bay road, and were on their way to the place where the horses were kept, when the doctor met them and turned them back.

Secondly, the doctor's wanderings with his party now became intelligible.

He had set out with the idea in his mind of avoiding that fatal tendency to swerve to the right of which Bruce had spoken.

But against this he had guarded so carefully, that it had led to a swerving in the opposite direction, as he himself had already partially acknowledged. That is to say, he had steadily swerved to the left.

The consequence was, that he had led his followers over a long and fatiguing journey, in a complete circle, until at last he had actually brought them into the Scott's Bay road. But he, thinking he had gone in an exact straight line, supposed it to be the Hall's Harbor road. As he wished to go to Cornwallis, he had, therefore, turned to the left, and gone forward under this false idea, and thus had met Bruce's party, who were going in the proper direction. He had made them turn back with him, and had thus led them to Scott's Bay, never imagining that he could be wrong until that awful moment when the ominous roar of the surf showed him that he must be very far away from where he supposed himself to be.

Old Bennie laughed loud and long as he listened to the story of their wanderings, and his laughter struck pleasantly and cheerily upon their ears. For they had all been refreshed by the generous repast which their host had spread before them, and a new life had arisen within them. Their past wanderings were now nothing more than amusing reminiscences. The table lay before them with its bounteous store ; beside them the big broad hearth sustained its load of crackling fire logs, among

which the flames danced and leaped up merrily; and there was in the broad old-fashioned apartment a certain joyous and social atmosphere, beneath whose influence all their natures relaxed into a kindly and genial glow. And thus it came to pass that the repast afforded a full and complete compensation for all the toils of the day.

They slept that night variously. The doctor had a room to himself. The settee formed a bed on which Jiggins and Bogud reposed. Sammy and Johnny Blue slumbered on straw beds stretched on the floor. As for the rest, they slept in the barn, on the hay, which they preferred to anything which the house could offer. Bennie tried to tempt them with various mattresses spread over the kitchen floor; but they chose the haymow, and Bennie himself finally declared that such a choice showed their sense.

The next morning came. They all arose refreshed. The fog had all cleared away, the sun shone brightly, and all the scene were displayed before their eyes.

They found Scott's Bay village to be a place of about five hundred inhabitants, who lived chiefly by fishing, to which they added farming. There was also a ship-yard here, which occasionally, in a busy season, added largely to the population. The houses were generally neat, and situated along the road.

All around the scenery was magnificent. The bay was a small indentation behind Blomidon, formed by a long, projecting spur of the North Mountain, which ran on one side of the Straits of Minas, and terminated in those rugged and sublime fragments of shattered and storm-riven rock that give to that point the name of Cape Split. The beach was a long crescent, that extended for about two miles, and was bounded at either extremity by lofty precipices. Before it lay the blue waters of the Bay of Fundy, with the long precipitous line of coast on either side; and immediately in front, though many miles away, rose a solitary island, with perpendicular sides and flat summit, known by the name of Ile Haute, both to the old Acadians, who thus named it, and to their English successors.

That day was Sunday, and they had to remain in the village. The doctor, however, found occupation. There was no clergyman stationed here, but there was a little chapel, where services were held about once a month. Here he performed the duties of his sacred office, and the villagers, hearing of his arrival, turned out in force. The doctor had a crowded house, and was so gratified by their attendance in the morning, and so touched by their quiet but earnest attention, that he held forth again in the afternoon.

As to the mistake that the doctor had made, he acknowledged it in the handsomest manner. In

the presence of all the boys, he said that Bruce had been right, and he had been wrong. He acknowledged his ignorance of the woods, and advised them, if they ever again went roaming through the forest, never to trust to the guidance of a doctor of divinity. He felt that he might be of some small service in guiding them through figurative forests, — in pointing out the true way through that “obscure wood” by which Dante once symbolized this world of man, — but as to ever again leading them, or having anything to do with them in any literal, material wood, he begged to be excused; and he also advised them not to have anything to do with him. He praised them all for their patient endurance in following him, and hoped finally that they would look back upon this adventure with such pleasant memories that all the troubles that they had endured would be forgotten.

On the other hand, every one of the boys declared that they had had a most delightful time, and that they would not want a better leader than the doctor; all of which showed plainly that the toil and trouble of these wanderings had already been forgotten in the peace and pleasure which had marked their journey's end.

There remained now the consideration of their homeward journey. On Saturday night the doctor had spoken to Bennie about it, and Bennie said he would see about getting conveyances for them as

far as the place where the doctor's horses had been left. But the doctor refused to let him make any arrangements on Sunday. As he wished to be back at Grand Pré on Monday in time to begin the school, he saw that it would be impossible to get Bennie's conveyances without breaking the Sabbath. But he couldn't do this. So there was only one alternative; and that was, to start very early on Monday morning, and walk to the place where the horses were. This he determined to do.

So, on Monday morning, at four, they all rose, and after partaking of a substantial breakfast, they bade Mr. and Mrs. Bennie an affectionate farewell, and departed. It was about five before they left. It was past seven when they reached their destination. The doctor found the horses and wagons all safe; but it took some time to feed the former, and it was after eight o'clock before they were able to start.

Then they drove home as fast as they could.

They arrived at the hill at about eleven. But the hour for commencing school was nine. The doctor's family and Messrs. Simmons and Long were quite anxious about the absentees. The school had not been opened. They were waiting for the return of the wanderers.

And thus, when the wanderers at length returned, they found that their delay had resulted in giving them an additional holiday.

For the school could not begin on that day.
That was evident.

And thus they found themselves blessed with
another reprieve from study.

Hurrah, boys !

XVIII.

Great Excitement. — What is it? — Pat busy among the small Boys. — A great Supper, and a sudden Interruption. — The Midnight Knell. — General Uproar. — Flight of the Grand Panjandrum. — A solemn Time. — In the Dark. — Bold Explorers. — The Cupola, and the Abyss beneath. — The Discovery.

HAT afternoon Pat was very busy among the smaller boys. He asked them many questions about the noise in the attic, and found there was great terror among them. For the noises had been heard both on Saturday night and Sunday night by those who were in that building; and they were so terrified that they would not have staid there a third night if the other boys had not come back. A superstitious awe had settled down deep into their minds, and they conversed with one another on this subject in subdued whispers.

Pat found them in this condition, and managed to make them still more terrified before he left them. Some of them were anxious to tell one of

the teachers about it all; but Pat dissuaded them by declaring that it would be of no use, and that they would only be laughed at for their pains.

Many of the other boys also, on coming back, felt a return of their former fear, and looked forward to the approach of night with some uneasiness. Pat made himself quite busy with these boys, too; and although he said nothing very directly, yet he made many mysterious hints that implied a great deal. He alluded to his own fearful position, with his bed in that very garret, separated by only a board partition from the dark haunts of the mystery. He spoke of his past experience; and it seemed as though, if he only chose, he could easily unfold a tale whose lightest word would harrow up their souls. Only he didn't. The boys begged him to tell all. But Pat wouldn't. He shook his head with deep and solemn meaning. And the boys looked on him with a profounder awe. And Pat, when he went up to his haunted chamber, was regarded as some poor victim on his way to his doom.

Pat, however, was not regarded in this light by all. Some there were who held aloof from this feeling of awe. Among these was Bart, who could not help noticing Pat's movements, and was very much impressed by them, though in a way very different from that in which the other boys were affected. He saw how Pat managed to stimulate the excited imaginations of others without saying

anything directly, and heard him lament most lachrymosely his hard fate in having to occupy a room in so fearful a place. He happened to be near the group to which Pat was talking, and could not help saying, —

“Well, Pat, my room’s just underneath yours, and if anything happens, you can take refuge with me. I’ll give you a sofa for the night.”

“Deed, thin, an you’ll find me comin down some night,” said Pat, “ony maybe I mightn’t iver git down there. Maybe the same thing that would dhrove me down might prevint me goin down.”

“Well, then, I’ll tell you what to do: you yell like Old Harry, and I’ll go up.”

“You’d niver get up.”

“Never get up? Why not?”

“It wouldn’t let you.”

“It? What It?”

“Why, It — the wan that walks.”

“The one that walks? That’s just what it doesn’t do. It’s very bad at walking.”

“You’d soon see, if ye’d iver find him. Any how, he’d shtop yer comin till my room.”

“Stop me? Nonsense! How can it stop me, when it’s in the cupola?”

As he said this, Bart looked in an expressive manner at Pat.

Pat looked away, and shook his head. Whether he suspected that Bart knew all or not, he did not give him back any look of intelligence, or show

any confusion. He simply looked away, and said, —

“Well, well, — aich wan must have his own opinion. We’ll know bettther perhaps some day.”

Bart smiled, and turned away. Soon he joined Bruce and Arthur.

“I’ve given Pat one or two hints already,” said he, “that I saw through the business, and I’ve just given him another. It’s a shame for him to go frightening the small boys that way. I was going to arrange it all to-morrow, or next day, so that they would look on it as a joke. But Pat is keeping up the gloomy, tragic character, and there’ll be more disturbance. Only he’d better look out. I’ve given him fair warning. There’s poor little Harry Thompson, with his face as pale as a sheet. It isn’t fair. It’ll have to be stopped.”

“Shall we stop it to-night?”

“Well, no; we had better wait till we see if it goes on, and whether Pat’s hand can be discerned in it. If we do find it so, I really don’t see any reason why he should be spared.”

From this it will be seen that Bart had already made his friends acquainted with the discovery which he had made in the garret, and that they had decided upon some general plan of action. They did not wish to put an end to the affair too prematurely or clumsily, but rather to terminate it in as brilliant a manner as possible.

As this day was positively the last of the holi-

days, the "B. O. W. C." determined to celebrate it by a modest supper in the Rawdons' rooms. Solomon was accordingly called upon, and, as always, he showed himself equal to the occasion. Personally, he was all smiles and joyousness. His little black beads of eyes twinkled incessantly, his face actually shone, and his complexion was a rich, oily sepia. He made desperate efforts to preserve an air of profound solemnity; but occasionally a short, sharp snort of a laugh would burst forth, after which his face would at once regain its mask of gravity.

"Dar!" said he, as he put the last dish on. "Dar! blubbed breddern, dis heah's all in hona ob dis great an shinin casium. You hab now finished your high an mighty ventures. Dar you hab bess ob 'Cad'my fare; none but de brave, you know, deserb dat fare. Off you go to lib on lasses an pork, an come back to vive you healt by de neficient car ob ole Solomon. Den off you clar agin, jes like mad, an git half starbed, so hab to come back agin to de tractions heah. An now, blubbed breddern, pitch in. Heah's turkey, an chicken, an sass, an mince pies, an apple tarts, an pickled 'ysters, an red-hot coffee, an cream, an fifty oder tings too noomrous to mentium. Fur fudda ticulars, gemmen, see small bills. Yours, truly."

With these words Solomon welcomed them to the feast that he had prepared. The boys seated themselves around the groaning board, and gave

themselves up to the joy of the occasion. They fought their battles o'er again. They went over all the events of the holidays. Again they drifted through the dense fog, or wandered through the trackless forest; again they waded through deep waters, or dug deep in the solid ground.

As they thus chattered and laughed, Solomon stood surveying them with a beaming smile illuminating all his dark but expressive features; and all the time he kept whispering to himself words expressive of his feelings on "dat ar casium."

Suddenly all this was interrupted.

It was late. All was still. All the other boys seemed to have gone to bed. Outside, the night was quite dark. And then and there, amid that stillness and in that darkness, it rang out right over their heads.

It was again that peculiar sound which they had once before heard, a long, shrill, abrupt, discordant shriek, repeated again and again, and echoing dismally throughout the gloomy extent of the long, unfinished garret, and dying away in the far distances with low and melancholy intonations. The ceiling above them only intervened between this room and the garret, so that they could hear it very plainly.

As the sound rang out, Solomon started. He was that moment lifting a plate, and the plate fell from his nerveless hands crashing on the floor. His face seemed to turn to a sickly greenish-

brown; he staggered back, and leaned against the wall.

At that moment there was a knock at the door.

This completed Solomon's horror. His knees gave way, his teeth chattered, his eyes rolled fearfully. He sank upon the floor, and remained there in a sitting posture.

"Come in," shouted Bruce. "Hallo, Solomon! What's the matter? Get up. Are you faint? Here, take a drink of water. Why, man, what's the matter?"

Encouraged by Bruce's words, Solomon made a great effort, and got up, edging away behind the boys as far from the door as he could get.

No one had come in. And so Arthur went to the door, and opened it. Nobody was there.

As he stood wondering, Jiggins's door opened, and Jiggins made his appearance, clad in the habiliments of the night.

"Hallo, Jiggins!" said Arthur. "Did you knock?"

"Me? Knock? Me? No," said Jiggins. "I — I was just in bed, and asleep, and heard that howl above; and then there came a knock. I thought it was you, wanting to see me."

"No; none of us knocked."

"Somebody did, then."

"And some one knocked at our door, too," said Arthur.

"What does it all mean?" said Jiggins.

By this time the other boys were out in the hall,

and were looking at one another. Bart looked along the floor, to see if the knock could have been produced by a stone thrown. Behind Tom might be seen Solomon, afraid to be too far behind, and yet not daring to venture forward.

"It's queer," said Arthur.

"I don't like it," said Jiggins, solemnly. "It somehow don't seem right. I feel really uncomfortable. There's something about that — is — not — right."

"Well, boys," said Bart, "shall we go up again?"

"I suppose we may as well."

"O, it's no use," said Arthur. "There's nothing more. Still, this knock ought to be investigated."

"Let's go, then."

"O, no," groaned Solomon. "No — don't — doo-on't go; don't go an leab dis pore stracted nigga 'posed to sich clamties. Don't leab a flicted ole darcy to de powers of darkness."

"Nonsense! Solomon. Don't be afraid. You wait here till we come back."

"Couldn't! Darsn't!" cried Solomon. "Nebber, nebber lib troo dat ar speriment. No, Mas'r Bart, *you* won't leab a ole fool; *you'll* stan by a ole man."

"All right," said Bart. "I'll see you down stairs, if you like. Come."

At that instant there sounded out a deep toll from the great bell in the cupola. It was one sin-

gle toll, but so profound, so awful, and so solemn, did that solitary knell peal forth through the still night air, that even those who felt no fear could not avoid an involuntary sensation of awe.

Solomon clutched at Bart's arm, and looked as though he had no life left in him.

"That settles it," said Bart. "That's a little too much, boys. We'll have to wind this thing up—won't we? Bring along a light, Phil."

"O, Mas'r Bart! get me home," groaned Solomon. "I member you when you wor a chile. I used to give you candy. Don let me be gobbled up."

"Nonsense! Solomon. Come along; I'll see you safe down, and then you can run for it to your room. Wait a minute, boys."

Down went Bart, with Solomon, shuddering and quaking, at his heels, and finally reached the door.

"Now, then, Solomon," he said, "run for it."

Away went Solomon, in a frenzy of fear, his whole frame shuddering in vague superstitious terror, his brain reeling with excitement, his fancy crowded with images of horror. Away he went; he burst into the boarding-house, he raced up the stairs, he rushed into his room as before, banged all the furniture against the door, and lay crouched in a corner, and quaking till morning.

Bart returned at once.

"Boys," said Jiggins, "it's a solemn time—a deeply solemn time!"

“ Won’t you come up, Jiggins ? ”

“ No, boys,” said Jiggins ; “ and I warn you not to go up. That’s a solemn place — a deeply solemn place.”

“ Well, come up, and help us to feel the solemnity,” said Bart.

Jiggins shook his head.

“ I don’t like the looks of it,” said he. “ It’s too solemn. There’s a certain something about it that makes me feel a — kind of a — a degree of a — SOLEMNITY — that — a — ”

But Jiggins’s voice died away upon the ears of the boys, as they ascended the stairs, before he could finish what he was trying to say.

The object of the boys in going up now was, first, to find the cause of the knock, and secondly, to find the cause of the tolling bell. They thought that perhaps some one might be concealed in the attic, and so they looked about very carefully in all directions. Tom stood at the head of the attic stairs, so as to bar the way to any possible fugitive. The others then went all over the attic most carefully, beginning at the end next Pat’s room, and so on over to the open space under the cupola. Crossing this, they searched all over the farther end. They peeped into every nook and corner, they left nothing unexamined. But at length they were forced to give up this search, for nothing could be found. Coming back, therefore, they stood in silence by the open space under the cupola, and

looked down into the gloomy, yawning chasm over which went the narrow plank pathway, and tried to peer through the deep gloom of this place.

After standing here for some time, they crossed to the other side, on their way back, and were here joined by Tom.

"Boys," said Bart, "we can't get at the bottom of that knock; that's evident; but we oughtn't to go till we find out about the bell. What do you say to going up?"

"Very well," said Bruce; "only we can't take the lamps."

"Of course not; and even if we did, the wind would blow them out. But it don't make any difference about that. We can feel about, you know. If any one's in the cupola, we'll have him, and find out who he is."

"I'll put the lamp on the plank here," said Tom, "and it will throw some light up."

"No," said Arthur; "it might get shaken off, and then good by to the old Academy. In a quarter of an hour, that old tinder-box below would be in flames. Put it over there on the floor. Never mind whether it throws up any light or not. We can all go up in the dark just as well."

Tom thereupon put his lamp on the solid floor of the garret; and after this the whole party walked the plank, and reached the foot of the ladders that ran up to the cupola. There were two of these, and in climbing up, one had to work his

way through a net-work of beams. In the day-time this was troublesome enough to an unpractised hand, and in the dark would have been impossible. But these boys knew every inch of the way, and could go up almost as easily in the dark as in the light.

Bart went first, Bruce next, then Arthur, then Phil, and Tom came last. The first ladder was slightly slanting in one direction, and terminated at a narrow board, from which the second ladder went up slanting in an opposite direction to the cupola. They went up quite nimbly and rapidly, considering the total darkness, and soon reached the cupola.

Bart was up there first.

In the middle of the cupola, and hanging immediately over the opening through which they came up, was the great bell, whose deep, solemn tones were familiar enough to them from the summons which it hourly sent forth during term time, but whose solitary knell, sounding as it lately did in the stillness of the night, had struck such sudden awe into their hearts. All around the bell was room enough to walk, and to look out of the windows of the cupola.

Bart had reached the cupola first, and he at once walked round it to find if any one was concealed here. The circuit was made by the time Bruce had come up, who immediately went round, as Bart had done. Then the others came up.

"Well," said Phil, "what's the luck?"

"There's no one here," said Bart.

"Have you felt everywhere?"

"Yes."

"He couldn't get up above there — could he?"

"O, no."

"Perhaps he's outside," said Arthur.

At this suggestion they all flung open the shutters which surrounded the cupola, and as it was too dark to see, they felt in all directions with their hands. They soon found, however, that no one was there.

"Now," said Phil, "the question is, how in the world could that bell have tolled?"

All were silent for a few minutes, trying to conjecture some possible way.

It will be seen that on this occasion Bruce had not a vestige of his former superstitious feeling. The affair with the donkey had taught him a salutary lesson, and the discovery that Bart had made, when communicated to him, had made him angry with himself for the fear which he had felt before. He was perfectly convinced now that there was some trick, which was the only cause of the knock and the toll of the bell, and this he tried to discover.

Suddenly he stooped down and felt under the bell.

"Boys," said he, after a pause.

"Well."

“Do you think a fellow could ring the bell without coming up into the cupola, by some very simple process? Do you think a string tied to the tongue could do it?”

“What!” cried all, in great excitement; and all of them sprang forward to feel for themselves.

But Bruce warded off their hands.

“Wait,” said he. “The string’s here. Stand back. I want to see where it goes to.”

The boys fell back now in greater excitement than ever. The string was a common piece of twine. Bruce followed it, and found that it went across to the side of the cupola, facing their end of the building, and then it was passed through a crevice close to the floor, and passed outside.

But where?

Bruce pulled the string. The other end was fastened; but by the resistance he could tell that it ran for a long distance.

“There’s only one place that it goes to, of course,” said Bart, “and that is Pat’s room. But why in the world he should get up this, passes my comprehension. We’ll have to teach him a lesson, boys.”

XIX.

A puzzling Position. — How to meet the Emergency. — A strange Suggestion. — Diamond cut Diamond, or a Donkey in a Garret. — Surprise of Jiggins on seeing the Stranger. — The fated Moment comes. — The Donkey confronts the Garret Noises. — The Power of a Bray.

HE boys remained in the cupola for some time longer. Once Bruce had the satisfaction of feeling the string become suddenly tight in his hands. He held it thus for a moment, as though to assure himself of the fact and then gave it a sudden pull.

It yielded !

The whole string was in his hands.

Bruce fell down on the floor, and his whole frame shook with smothered laughter.

“What in the world’s the matter with you, Bruce ?” cried Bart.

“The string ! ha, ha, ha, ha ! The string ! — ha, ha ! — The string !”

“The string ? Well, what about the string ?”

“Why, I’ve got it. I felt it grow tight, — ha,

ha, ha!—and I gave it a jerk,—ha, ha, ha!—and it came,—ha, ha, ha, ha!—and now Pat's wondering what's become of it,—ha, ha, ha, ha!—and he's thinking that the ghost he was shamming must be a real one, after all!"

Either Bruce's laughter was contagious, or else the boys saw something irresistibly funny in Pat's supposed consternation at losing the string; but whatever was the cause, the boys burst forth also into fits of laughter, which, however, they tried to smother as well as they could.

And now the question was—what to do.

At first they were going to take the string away, but they finally decided to leave it just as it was, so as to see what Pat would do under the circumstances.

After coming to this conclusion, they decided to go to bed for the night, and defer any further consideration of the subject till the following day, when they would feel fresher and less fatigued. So they descended once more, and separated for the night.

The next morning they found the excitement greater than ever. All who were in the main building had heard the noises of the night, and some in the boarding-house had heard the toll of the bell. Jiggins was sad and exceedingly solemn. Bogud went about saying that none of them could tell what might happen; which language might be taken to signify an undeniable

truism ; or, on the other hand, it might be considered as a suggestion of the existence of some profound, gloomy, and inscrutable mystery. Bogud rather preferred that it should be taken in that light. Muckle, Johnny, Sammy, and Billymack, all announced that they thought there was something in it, and shook their heads with dark meaning and impressive emphasis over the whole business. Pat was as usual, only a little more so. He was active in all kinds of hints. He refused to tell his own experience of the night, but suggested something grand, gloomy, and peculiar. He looked like one who wished none to question him about the secrets of his prison house. He expressed a mournful resignation to that hard fate which made him the neighbor of the fearful denizens of the garret, and meekly, but firmly, refused the offers of several boys to give him accommodation till the trouble should cease. Also, Pat had an excellent appetite, and his ruddy face and bright eyes belied the cultivated mournfulness of his expression. Bart had gone up into the cupola before breakfast, and had found that the string was taken away. He at once concluded that Pat had been up, and had quietly removed it for the day. If he had felt any consternation at having the string jerked from his hands, he had, no doubt, got completely over it, and probably attributed it to some ordinary cause, very different from the real one.

Pat's demeanor was such that the boys saw his evident determination to keep up the excitement. He went about as before among the small boys, heightening their fears, and giving any number of dark suggestions to their excited imaginations. Bogud, and Jiggins, and Sammy, and Johnny, and Billymack, and Muckle also sought Pat's society, and left it more confirmed than ever in their opinions. Jiggins was more than ever convinced that it was a deeply solemn season. In fact, he kept saying so to everybody all day long.

The teachers could not be ignorant of the excitement, but they took no notice of it. They thought it was some harmless trick of some of the more mischievous boys, which did not call for their intervention as yet, but would probably be revealed in the natural course of things. So the boys were all left to themselves.

At nine o'clock the school was once more opened, after so many delays, and the duties of the new term commenced.

Alas, the first day of a new term! What a horror it brings to the heart of a boy! Fresh from the green fields, from the blue sky, from the fragrant woods, the babbling brook, the sounding shore, the lofty precipice, the bounding wave, — from all these he enters into the gloom, and darkness, and confinement of the school-room. Can there be any wonder that the fresh, young, boyish heart should quail, and his bounding young life

droop, and his uproarious spirits flag on that dreary first day? Where is his life, in which of late he so exulted? Where is that grand face of Mother Nature, so dear to every boy? Where are the odor of the fields, the balsamic air of the forest, the invigorating smell of the salt sea? These are the loved memories that afflict him at his dingy desk. The first day at school for a boy is homesickness in its broadest sense. I don't think anybody can be so homesick as a boy may be; nor can a boy at any other time be so homesick as at such a time as this. Homesickness, moreover, is not merely a pining for one's actual home, but it is also a yearning for pleasures that have fled,—some lost grace of life,—some sweet charm which has passed away.

Now, none of our boys were at all inclined to what they called "spooniness;" but still they could not help feeling the common evil of boy humanity. The school hours passed slowly and heavily, and they tried to cheer themselves with the thought that it would not be so unpleasant in a few days, after they had become used to it.

After school was over, the "B. O. W. C." engaged in an earnest discussion over the situation. One common resolution was in all their minds, and that was, to put an end to the ghost in the garret. But how was it to be done?

"We might quietly go and tell the fellows all about it," said Tom.

"Yes," said Bart, "but that would be too clumsy. What I want is something more artistic; I want a dramatic close, in which there shall be a scene full of effect. If we could only work it so as to let the thing bring itself to a conclusion in some effective way, it would be a great deal more satisfactory to all concerned."

"I should like some way," said Bruce, "in which Pat would be conscious that he was completely used up; and I think that among us five we might arrange a counterplot against his plot."

"Pat certainly deserves some sort of punishment for the way he has been frightening the small boys. He has been at it all day; I dare say he's at it now. Of course before dark he'll sneak up and fasten his string to the tongue of the bell again, so as to get all ready for the night's operations."

"We can easily find some way, I should think," said Arthur, "of paying off Pat, without being cruel in any way to him. A smart shock, administered delicately and neatly, would about suit my idea of the case."

"Yes, but how can we get something which will be mild, yet smart,—delicate, yet effective? That's the point which we don't seem able to decide."

As they talked in this way they were walking up the hill towards the old French orchard. As they neared the place Bart's eyes wandered

over the adjoining pasture field, and rested on the form of that donkey which had borne so large a share in the experiences of the past few days.

"I have it!" he cried, suddenly.

"What?" asked they.

"The donkey!"

"What about it?"

"He shall help us."

"How?"

"The donkey's our plan. We'll play him off against the ghost, and Pat! The donkey was once a ghost himself. He'll be the very one to do the thing up properly; he's had experience. After performing so successfully at the hole, at our expense, you can't place any limit to his capacity. Yes, boys, the donkey's the very man."

"I don't see what good the donkey's going to be," said Phil.

"What good? — the very thing we want."

"How?" asked Bruce.

"Pat won't come up here to get frightened," said Arthur.

"And his room is too far up for us to make the donkey bray under it," said Tom.

"All very true," said Bart; "but then what's to prevent our marching the donkey up into the garret?"

"What?"

"Marching him up into the garret."



GETTING THE DONKEY UP STAIRS. — Page 267.

The boys looked puzzled.

"Can you get him up?"

"Of course we can."

"But think of the horrible racket he'd make going up. We couldn't keep it secret."

"O, yes, we could. We could fix him so that he could go up without any noise in particular."

"How?"

"Why, by putting bits of carpet around each of his feet. We could then get him up stairs somehow. A basket of oats, for instance."

The boys thought for a time, and then burst into fits of laughter at the idea.

"You see," said Bart, "it would be the most magnificent thing ever undertaken on this hill. Besides, how splendid it would be to bring our ghost face to face with Pat's own private ghost, and let them confront each other. What a tremendous, stupendous, overwhelming, and altogether unparalleled uproar there would be! Pat would then be confronted with something different from anything that he had been calculating on. We'd break down the panic of the boys, and it would all end in a roar of laughter."

"But what a row there'll be!" exclaimed Phil.

"I wonder which party'll begin," said Arthur.

"Pat's side, of course," said Bruce.

"I hope," said Tom, "that our side'll do his duty."

"O, we'll have to keep him up to it. Donkey's

that can bray, and won't bray, must be made to bray."

"He's such an obstinate brute," said Arthur, "that I don't believe we'll be able to do anything."

"O, we'll manage that," said Bruce. "The five of us are strong enough to pull him along if he won't go himself."

"We can get a whip, or a stout stick somewhere," said Phil.

"No," said Bart; "no beating if we can help it. I'm averse, on principle, to all corporal punishment. I formed a deep prejudice against it in my early school days. No, boys: remember what Pope says: —

‘If I had a donkey,
And he wouldn't go,
D'ye think I'd wallop him?
No, no, no.’

On the contrary, I would endeavor, if possible, to secure his coöperation with our plans by the gentler method of moral suasion — oats, for instance."

"Or a good fat thistle."

"Or a handful of sorrel."

"Or a cold boiled turnip."

"Or some delicate chickweed."

After some further consideration they came to the conclusion to make an attempt to carry out the donkey proposal that very night.

In the course of the evening various things were prepared. A number of bits of old carpet with

some cord were most conspicuous among these preparations.

Their plan was based on the supposition that Pat had not heard this donkey bray, and was, perhaps, unaware of its existence here. They were quite sure that he had not been up near the pasture field since the donkey came, and so he was probably unaware of its presence. Consequently when Pat began his little tricks to-night, he would find a startling coöperator.

The boys waited till all were in bed, and then brought down the donkey. They had but little trouble in leading him along. They took him into a grove in front of the Academy, and there tied bits of carpet around each foot.

Then began their efforts to get him up stairs. Here was where they anticipated failure. But to their surprise this was accomplished without any very great difficulty. The little animal, tempted by turnips held in front of his nose, encouraged by strokings, and pulled and pushed along, made a rush up the first flight. He went up as nimbly as a goat, and didn't make more noise than six men pounding up with all their might. The noise certainly exceeded all that they had calculated upon.

Then came the second flight. The donkey went up triumphantly; but by the time he reached the top he had lost three of the four bandages in which his feet were tied. Here they heard a door

open at the foot of the stairs, and Bogud's voice calling, —

“What's all that? Who's there?”

“O, nothing. It's only a new student,” said Bart, quietly.

Bogud's door closed again.

They then led the donkey on. But just as they reached Jiggins's door, it opened, and Jiggins put forth his head, holding a candle out, and blinking at them. To his horror he saw immediately in front of him the shaggy companion of the “B. O. W. C.” But at the same moment he recognized the boys, and this reassured him.

“What — what's all this?” he gasped.

“It's a nightmare,” said Bart; “we're taking him up to fight the ghost.”

At this the donkey looked amiably at the figure in the doorway, and making a step forward, put his head through, and was about entering when the occupant of the room banged the door in his face.

The boys then resumed their journey. But the last flight was not passed without a fearful racket, and the donkey lost the remaining bandage. At length, however, they reached the top, and walking softly themselves, they led the donkey over to a point near where Pat's room was.

Leaving him here, they then retired.

The donkey was thus left alone to himself, and to a cold boiled turnip, which Bart had put under his nose. After a short season of bewilderment, he proceeded to regale himself on this.

The "B. O. W. C." all separated, and went to bed.

The characters in this drama were left to take care of themselves.

Now Pat, in his room at the end of the long garret, had heard the racket made by the donkey in coming up, and at first did not know what to make of it. At length, however, the noise ceased, and for about half an hour all was still.

Suddenly there came a loud, wild shriek from afar through the long garret, followed by others in succession.

But Pat did not quake, or shiver — not he.

He waited for a few minutes with a pleasant smile of keen enjoyment on his face. Then he went to the window of his room, and pulled a string, which came in from the outside.

And there followed a deep, solemn toll, that broke upon the stillness of the night with a gloomy and awful intonation, carrying terror to many poor little boys, who heard it and quaked with superstitious fear.

The donkey had finished his turnip !

He had begun to reflect on the peculiarity of his situation !

All dark around. No pleasant pasture, no starlit sky — nothing but utter darkness. He felt uncomfortable. He stood fixed in one spot, and the very unusual situation told heavily upon his spirits.

Had he been in some comfortable stall, or some

sequestered pasture, he might have lain down and slept the sleep of the donkey. But he had been badgered and deceived, and such a getting up stairs he never had seen.

And now, in the midst of these reflections, there came this uproar of shrieks and tolling bells. It was too much. It was not at all what he was accustomed to.

So he proceeded to enter a protest against the whole business.

The donkey raised his head!

He elevated his tail!

He spread his legs apart so as to gain a firmer attitude!

Then he burst forth:—

He! haw! He! Haw!

Heeeeeee! Haaaaaaw!

He! haw! He! haw!

He haaaaaaaaaaw!

Heeeeeeeeeee!

Haaaaaaaaaaaaaw!

HEEEEE! HAAAWW!

HE HAAAAAW!!!

The noise of that terrific bray, as it sounded out, burst forth close by Pat. He was on one side of the partition. The donkey was on the other. He was just about seizing the cord so as to give another pull to the tongue of the bell, when there arose this unexpected, this tremendous interruption. Whether Pat had ever heard the bray of a

donkey before mattered not at that moment. He certainly had never before heard a donkey, and an injured donkey too, at midnight, in a garret, close beside him, pour forth, so suddenly, and so terribly, and so deafeningly, such accumulated woes.

Had a cannon suddenly exploded close by Pat's elbow, he could not have been more utterly overwhelmed.

He sprang back. For a moment he stood paralyzed. Then he jumped at the door. He tore it open. He leaped down the stairs. Bart's room was at the bottom. He opened the door, burst in, and banged it, and locked it behind him.

Then he stood against the door, making the pressure of his back an additional barrier against the entrance of any pursuer.

XX.

Full, complete, and final Revelation of the Great Garret Mystery. — Confession of Pat. — Indignation of Solomon. — His Speech on the Occasion. — The Authorities of the School roused. — Pat and the "B. O. W. C." are hauled up to give an Account.

"**H**ALLO!" cried Bart, who was roused by the noise. "Who's that out there? What's the row?"

"It's ony me," said Pat, in a faint voice.

"You, Pat! Is it you? Well, I'd say I'm very glad to see you, only it happens to be too dark to see anything. Well, Pat, what's up?"

By this time Bart had got out of bed, and had reached the sitting-room, where Pat was still standing against the door.

"Didn't ye hair it?" he said.

"Hear it? Hear what?"

"IT!" cried Pat. "There's no mistake this time."

"O, come, Pat, none of that nonsense. That does very well for the little boys; but I understand it all."

“Didn’t ye hair it?” cried Pat. “It nairly blew me head off, so it did. An down hair I coom wid wan lape, so I did — an it afther me.”

“It? What It?”

“Shure you know what.”

“You don’t mean that rubbish about a ghost. I know all about that. You needn’t talk to me that way.”

At this moment the distant bray of the donkey sounded once more. Pat clutched Bart’s arm, and cried,—

“There it is agin. It’s a coomin. O, I knowed it.”

“That!” said Bart, opening the door and listening. “Why, that’s only the bray of a donkey. You’ve heard it often enough — haven’t you?”

“The bray of a donkey!” faltered Pat. “Sure it’s me that’s heard it.”

“Well, this must be one.”

“But who ivir heard of a donkey in a garret?”

“O, I dare say he’s strolled up there to visit your friend in the cupola.”

And now, Bart, not caring to prolong Pat’s terror, explained the cause of the noise that had terrified him, letting him know at the same time why it was done. He told Pat that they found out about the screech, and the bell, and sent up the donkey so as to give him a little taste of that fear which he was so anxious to give to others. As they had given him a shock, he was satisfied. Had Pat been at all

an ill-tempered fellow, he might have resented all this ; but as he was one of the best-natured fellows in the world, he showed not the smallest particle of resentment. On the contrary, the moment the load of horror was lifted off by Bart's disclosure, his buoyant spirits rose at once, and all burst forth to the full swing of his jovial, mirthful, ridiculous, reckless Irish temperament.

"Faith, an it's me that's caught — 'deed an it is so, thin," he cried, with a burst of laughter. "An ye got the donkey up to the garret ! Sure it bates the wurruld, so it does. An didn't I hair the noise ? but how cud I ivir dhrame it wor that. An ye got him jist close fornist me, so ye did ! It wor just in me own air that he hooted, so it wor."

Pat now grew quite communicative, and told Bart all about it. His motive for creating an excitement was simply to get a chance of laughing at the other boys, who had so often laughed at him. There was no malice whatever in his intention ; nothing at all of the nature of vengefulness ; but simply a mischievous and thoughtless idea of throwing some ridicule on the boys generally. Bart's discovery of the truth was known to him, but he did not care for that ; he was determined to keep up his little joke as long as it could be kept up. He had been startled that night when the string had been jerked from his hand, but afterwards concluded that it was the wind. The knock at the doors he explained very simply. He had

stolen up barefoot, and as the screech sounded, he had struck each door with a stick, and then ran. He was down below before they could see him. All this Pat explained with perfect ease and much merriment, regarding it all as a good joke, not even excepting the last affair with the donkey.

But what, it may be asked, was that screech which had been the beginning of it all?

It was all explained on the following morning.

Early on that morning the donkey had been brought down stairs with little difficulty, but with an immense amount of noise. As the boys brought him out, Pat marched quietly after them, carrying an enormous OWL!

One by one the boys heard the news. The whole school came flocking out to look upon the objects of their late terror. Gradually the whole story came out, and the boys, in their sudden recoil from a general panic, now gave way to the wildest uproar and merriment. A laughing procession followed the donkey to his rural home, while Pat took the owl down into the kitchen to get some meat for it from Solomon.

Meanwhile Solomon had heard of the revelation of the dark mystery, and was running out to satisfy himself, when he met Pat half way.

“O, de sakes, now!” cried old Solomon. “What dis heah scubbry dat hab turn up on dis smilin an ’spicious morn. Whar’s dat ar an’mal what hab ben kickin up sech a ’menjous bobberation, an ob

whose 'sploits I hab heard so much? Am dis heah de 'sterious an stror'ny phiantium dat hab frikened dis 'stracted ole nigga man mos to deff?"

"Sure an here he is," said Pat, holding forward the bird, "an as fine a owl as ye'd wish fur till clap yer eyes on, so he is."

Solomon stood looking at the owl for a few moments. Then he made a low bow, with absurd extravagance of gesture. Then he burst forth in a strange tone, which seemed like a desperate attempt at sarcasm.

"Mas'r Owl, sah," said he, rolling up his eyes and spreading out his hands,—"Mas'r Owl, sah, good morn, sah. I'se so drefful glad to see you, sah!—such a 'mendious honna, sah!"

He then made another low bow, after which he went on with an attempt at more scathing sarcasm than ever, in which there was also visible a tinge of something like indignation.

"Mas'r Owl, sah, ar you awah, sah, dat you hab ben 'ferin berry much wid de 'pose ob an aged but spectb'l gem'n ob colla, sah? a pus'n, sah, dat's bettan a dozen ob you, sah—bein as he is a Granpanderdrum, an 'sides bein fessa ob de cool and airy 'partment in dis yah 'Cad'my—fessa, sah, ob ebba so many yeahs' stan'in, sah—fren ob de docta, sah, an not a pus'n to be 'posed on, sah? Do you know what you are, sah? You're a mis'ble darky, sah—no better'n a crow, sah! Do you know what I'm gwine to do, sah, dis bressed mo-

ment, sah? I've biled turkeys, an chickens, an geese, an ducks, an pattidges, an quails, an snipes, but I hab nebba biled a owl. Wal, dat ar's jest what I'm a gwine to do now, sah. Yes, sah, I'm 'terminated 'pon dat ar. In you go to de pot, body, bones, an beak — horns, tail, an all, sah."

"An what's the use?" said Pat: "shure he isn't a poll parrot, that can talk back at ye an give ye as gud as he gets. He's ony an owl, an he can't spake a wurrud, so he can't.

"Any how, I'se gwine to bile him dis bressed minit."

"Ah, now, be aff wid ye; go long, an don't be foolin," cried Pat, as Solomon made an effort to take the owl; "shure he niver did ye any harrum at all at all. Shure he's Mистер Slocum's tame owl, so he is, that's run away, an ben livin in our garret — an I'm takin him back to his owner."

"Mis'r Sloc'm," said Solomon. "Well, Mis'r Sloc'm doesn't lib down heah — he doesn't. What you a bringin him heah for?"

"Sure he ony wants his mate."

"His mate," cried Solomon. "Hab his mate flowed off sides him. Ef I fin dat ar mate 'bout dese yah primises, I'll bile her to pieces."

"Ah, be aff wid ye! Shure it's ony a paice av mate that I want fur the owl."

"A piece ob meat!" cried Solomon. "Nebba, sah. Dat ar bird hab 'sulted me."

And he drew up his aged form with severe dignity.

But Pat coaxed and pleaded, and the end of it was, that Solomon was prevailed on to give him a piece of meat. The owl devoured it greedily, and then Pat took him away to his owner.

The bird, as Pat said, belonged to Mr. Slocum, who lived about two miles away. He had received him as a very fine specimen of a screech owl, from a sea captain, who had brought him from abroad, and had got tired of him. Mr. Slocum happened to be in Halifax at the time, and brought the bird home in triumph a few weeks before. During the previous week he had escaped, and had found his way through an open window of the cupola into the garret. Pat had discovered him first, and as his terrific hoot sounded out, frightening the boys, he took advantage of the circumstance to perform a few additional tricks of his own, with the consequences that have been narrated. It was only on the previous day that Pat had found out who was the owner of the wandering bird. He happened to hear people speaking of it in the village store as he was making some purchases. So, now that the whole affair had come to an end, he thought he might as well restore the lively bird to its rightful owner.

Meanwhile the donkey had been taken to his pasture, and the boys returned, and school began, and the business of the day soon engrossed their whole attention.

After school Pat and the boys of the "B. O.

W. C." received a message from Mr. Long, requesting them to come to his study.

For the affair had spread, and the teachers had learned all about it. Of course it was a thing that could not be passed over. After some discussion, however, it was considered that it was not of sufficient importance to be brought before Dr. Porter ; and so Mr. Long was requested to see all the boys concerned in the affair, and afterwards report.

Mr. Long's study was a room situated immediately under Bart's. He generally left at nine in the evening, and slept elsewhere. Consequently he had not been in the way of hearing those "voices of the night." It was to this room, then, that the "B. O. W. C.," together with Pat, bent their steps, trying to conjecture what Mr. Long proposed to do about it.

XXI.

Called to Account. — Mr. Long and the B. O. W. C. — They get a tremendous “Wigging.” — Pat to the Rescue. — Mr. Long relaxes. — The unbidden Guest. — Captain Corbet and the irrepressible Babby. — Coming in Joy to depart in Tears. — The Relics again. — A Solemn Ceremony. — A Speech, a Poem, a Procession, all ending in a Consignment of the exhumed Treasure to its Resting-place.

S they entered the study they found Mr. Long seated in an arm-chair by his study table. He looked at them with a grave and severe countenance, and motioned them to seats.

They sat down.

“Boys,” said Mr. Long, in a cold and constrained voice, “None of you will accuse me of ever interfering with legitimate sport, or will think that I am destitute of sympathy with boyish ways and manners. I think you know me well enough to believe that I take a deep interest in everything that can make you enjoy yourselves here ; that I

want you to love this place with all your hearts, and through all your after lives to look back upon Grand Pré Academy with the most affectionate recollection. That very feeling I have now, and it is this that animates me while I call upon you to give an account of those disturbances in which you have been engaged.

“ You see a line must be drawn somewhere,” he continued. “ Your affair at the French cellar was not altogether what it ought to have been, and I do not approve of it at all. Apart from the lateness of the hour, there was about the whole transaction an air of wildness — a certain headlong recklessness of sport, which I should rather check than indulge. Still, I have nothing to say about that now. You seem to have gone into that affair with an impetuosity of pure fun, that blinded you to anything objectionable which might have been in it. Besides, you have already told all about that, and in a whimsical way that disarmed all reproof.

“ But, boys,” resumed Mr. Long, in a severer tone, “ this last affair has been really a serious offence against discipline. The school has been disturbed, it seems, for many nights. There have been all kinds of noises; howlings, yellings, and screechings, of all sorts; rappings and knockings. Now, all these things may be very funny to the contrivers of them, but you are surely old enough to know that they may be excessively dangerous to sensitive minds. Did you not think of the poor

little fellows here who might receive a serious mental shock from such disturbances? Is it possible that you could have been blind to all things except your own selfish amusement? Is this the sort of thing that is becoming to you — you,” he repeated, “from whom I hoped nothing but examples of manliness, and generosity, and frankness, and chivalry? I will not believe that it is possible for you to fail in these qualities. I trust rather to what I *know* of you, and I will attribute all this to nothing except utter thoughtlessness on your part. And it is that very thoughtlessness, if nothing worse, that I blame. It was not worthy of you; it was utterly beneath you. It was a very serious offence.”

The boys fairly writhed under all this, and Bart, with his face flushing scarlet, and his eyes gleaming with excited feeling, was about to speak; but Mr. Long commanded silence with his uplifted hand.

“But what shall I say,” he continued, “to this last business? Here everything reaches a climax. Not satisfied with having thrown the whole school into a panic, and with making the garret seem a haunted place to most of the boys, — a place, in fact, into which none dared to go but yourselves, — not satisfied with all this, you determined upon an act which is sufficient to demand serious punishment. Having already raised an almost intolerable terror in the school, you deliberately proceed to

intensify even this, and raise that terror into a perfect anguish. Was not the panic sufficient already? Did you wish it to terminate in some tragedy? Would it have been satisfactory to you if the feeble brain of some of the younger boys had given way under this new terror? if some one of them had suddenly gone mad, as that abhorrent roar, that mixture of howls, and yells, and screeches, and hoots, rising up into an unearthly din, and intermingled with the awful toll of the bell, had burst upon his ear? Such things have happened. There have been, not boys, but men, who have gone mad from things even less terrible than these. Why, when I think of what might have happened, I shudder, and I stand amazed at what I charitably consider your thoughtlessness; though for such thoughtlessness as this, what punishment can be adequate?

“And now,” he concluded, “what have you to say for yourselves?”

All this time the faces of the boys were like fire, and writhing in indignation, they looked back at Mr. Long as he hurled against them what they felt to be unmerited accusations. They had only been concerned in the last affair for the purpose of putting an effectual end to the other. But as they sat there in the consciousness of innocence, they saw that it was impossible for them to explain it. They could not tell what they knew, for that would be to accuse Pat.

“Mr. Long,” burst forth Bart, starting up, with his face in a flame, and his voice trembling with indignation, “every word that you have uttered is utterly and totally undeserved by us. I assure you most solemnly that we have never violated any principles of honor or of chivalry. You do not know the facts, sir, or you would never have uttered those bitter words. You have done us great wrong, sir; we are not deserving of such charges as these. We are innocent; but we are not in a position to explain.”

Bart paused for a moment, and in that momentary pause another voice burst in as eagerly and as impetuously as his own.

It was Pat.

He had started to his feet just as Bart did, but Bart had spoken before him. As soon as he could get a chance he burst in.

“Mr. Long,” he cries, “it’s all a mishtake what yer sayin. As thrue as I’m standin here,—and I’m tellin no lie, so I ain’t,—it was me that did it, so it was. And they knowed it was me, so they did. And it was only to play a little harrumless joke that I did it. I didn’t bring the owl there at all, at all. He coom there himself. He howled, an the ony blame to me wor, that I didn’t tell what I knowed. Besides, I thried till alarrum the boys a bit. Nivir fear that wan av thim same goes mad. They injied the excitemint, so they did. Afther a day or two, I tied a sthring till the bell-knocker, an

give it a bit av a pull, an I knocked at the Rawdons' dure and at Jiggins'. An I'm the ony wan to blame; an if there's till be any punishin a goin, I'm the wan that's going till take it, so I am."

All these words Pat poured forth with feverish impetuosity, as though anxious to tell everything before he could be interrupted. Not a word did he say about the other boys and the donkey. He left it to be inferred that he was to be blamed for the donkey also. He intended — the warm-hearted Irish lad — that he should be punished for that too.

"Mr. Long," cried Bart, bursting in, "since Pat has told about the owl himself, we can confess our share. We brought up the donkey."

"An it worn't a thrick," said Pat. "It wor till frighten me, so it wor, an make me stop me bell-pullins an knockins. That's what it wor. An didn't I get it! I wor jest pullin the sthring that wor fastened till the bell, whin the donkey let aff a bray that knocked me clain from me oun room all the way down stairs, head over heels, an fut first. That's what it did. An that's as thrue as I'm standin here a tellin av it."

Mr. Long now began to question them, and soon all the facts were elicited. As the truth became known, the severity of his manner relaxed, and his tone became pleasant and kindly.

"Well, boys," said he, "all this puts the matter in a very different light. The owl came and screeched himself. Pat was only to blame for as-

sisting the excitement. You were only to blame for taking so very violent a way to stop the affair. It might have been stopped without that, if you had simply told all about it. But I see the odd kind of motive you had. You merely wished to surround the denouement, as you say, with such absurd accompaniments, that no boy on the hill would ever dare to hint at a ghost again. Well, I may not like your way of going to work, but I at least understand your motives. I need not say how glad I am at this explanation. I came here under a false impression, and regret that I spoke with such severity. The only thing that I blame about this is, that it was what is called a practical joke, both on Pat's part and on yours; and that is a thing which I have always endeavored to put down. So now, boys," he concluded, "let me say —"

At this moment there came a faint rap at the door.

Mr. Long looked at the door, but took no further notice of the sound. Thinking it was a mistake, he continued, in a pleasant tone, —

"Let me say, boys, that I have such confidence in all of you, that I feel sure —"

At this there came another rap, somewhat louder.

"Come in," said Mr. Long.

The door opened slowly. Those in the room were behind it as it opened, and they could not see who was coming. Gradually it opened, and then there stepped forth the venerable form of Captain

Corbet. He carried in his arms a little bundle, which he held with the tenderest care; and there was on his face an expression made up of pride, of triumph, and of a certain joyous consciousness which he possessed that he was the bearer of that which would not fail to excite similar emotions in others.

The moment Mr. Long saw him and his burden, he started to his feet, looking very pale.

Captain Corbet stood in the doorway, swaying his shoulders backward and forward, so as to afford an agreeable motion to his tender charge; his head hung on one side, and he looked upon the company with that peculiar expression of benignity which may be seen on the face of some indulgent father who has prepared some rich treat for his children.

“What!” exclaimed the venerable Corbet; “all here — all jined together on this momentuous occasion! An me afeared that some on yew’d miss it! Wal, it air lucky—ain’t it? You see, the ole woman, she went off to see a cousin of hern, that’s got her youngest darter down with the spotted fever,—ony I dare say, arter all, it’s ony the measles. So I see this here young an tender infant, a kerowin in his keradle like all possessed; an I says, Now’s the perpitious momunt; an I says to the offesperin, ‘Doozy wanter see Missr Long, den? Doozy wanter see zee boys? An so he sall!’ Fur, my Christian friens, I promised you, solemn, on

that thar vyge, that some day I'd bring the babby. An you, sir, Mr. Long, my benefactor, I vowed to you that sence you'd saved this tender babe from rewination arter his feyther's laid low, he should come an show you his own self, and look up in your keountenance, through his blue orbs, and smile upon you with his be-yeau-teefulest smile! An thar he air."

Saying this, Captain Corbet proceeded to remove the coverings from the face of his beloved burden.

Mr. Long stood motionless and mute. His eyes wandered to the window. Captain Corbet was standing in the doorway, barring the passage, and slowly and tenderly drawing aside the veil that hid from view the face that he loved.

Suddenly Mr. Long started.

His resolution was taken.

He walked towards the door.

Captain Corbet saw him not. His eyes, his thoughts, and his heart were all engaged in his delightful employment.

"Ah, captain," said Mr. Long, hurriedly, "I hope you're very well. Is there anything I can do for you? If so, I can see you some other time. I'm in a great hurry. I've just finished some business which I had with these boys. You will have to be kind enough to excuse me."

He touched Captain Corbet's shoulder, and tried to push him gently aside, so as to pass.

Captain Corbet's hand, which had been removing the coverings, fell slowly to his side. His face turned up and confronted Mr. Long's with an expression of utter bewilderment, as though the language which he had heard was perfectly incomprehensible. His lips moved, but no sound escaped.

"You'll have to excuse me," said Mr. Long, kindly. "I'm in a great hurry. Will you allow me to pass?"

Mechanically Captain Corbet moved to one side. Mr. Long hurried out. He descended the stairs; he walked rapidly out of the Academy, and down into the village, and far, far away.

Captain Corbet stood at the doorway looking at vacancy. At length he turned. There was a certain blank amazement in his face, as though he could not yet understand what had happened.

"He said he was in a hurry!" he murmured. "He's gone! actilly — an raelly — and terewly — gone — an *sech* a chance! Why, it'll never come agin, may be. An he's ben an missed it — lost it — actilly therrown it away! Boys," he continued, after a pause, in a hollow voice, "am I a dereamin?"

"O, no, captain," said Bart, cheerily. "You're wide awake. Come in and sit down."

The captain shook his head.

"Pinch me!" said he, in the same tragic tone.

No one obeyed.

Captain Corbet heaved a heavy sigh.

"No," said he. "I feel that I'm awake. Here's the babby — here's its parient. But I must rest, an meditate over this harrowin occurrience."

Saying this, he walked forward, and seated himself in Mr. Long's vacated chair.

"Thar," he exclaimed, after a long silence, raising his meek face, and solemnly regarding the boys. "Thar, it air over! That dream hath past and fled, an the feeble idee I ben a hevin of Mr. Long's better natoor air totially overtherrown by that muve! For it was a perroud hope of the aged and tew sangu-wine Corbet to give thanks to the man that delivered him from rewination in the most effectooil way, by a bringin of the babby face tew face with his benefacture, an a teachin of the tender infant to summile on the author of his footur fortin. We met," he continued, as a darker shade came over his venerable countenance. "We met, an I thot we'd feel a mootooil jy. I stood a lingerin long by yonder open portial, a holdin of him in suspense, an a pictoorin tew myself his silent raptoor. Why, do you know, boys, I'd even made up my mind to *let him hold the babby*, — jest for a leetle, — if he begged hard, an if the infant didn't cry. That's what I was a keepin in store for him. What do ye think of that now?"

And after this announcement of his late plan, he looked earnestly at the boys to witness the full effect of that disclosure.

“ An what was the result ? Did he spering tew meet me ? Did he clasp the babe ? Did he evince a mite of yearnin or kimpassion ? Did he even try to get a sight of the pootiest ittle face zat ever was — bress him.” Here Captain Corbet began to show signs of growin maudlin, but he checked himself and went on. “ He ! not he. What did he do, young sirs ? You saw him. Bar witness tew what I say. He took his departoor. He felled, like an evil sperrit, at the approach of that cherub. An I — I felt it sore — I felt it — an I feel it still, — yes, I do, — yea, even down to the toes of my butes ! ”

Here followed a long silence, which the boys did not break, for they did not know what to say to soothe the woes of the afflicted captain. At length he looked up, and went on in a tone of sadness, in which might be detected something like resentment.

“ Fust opinions is allus krect. You mind, boys, what I told you on the briny deep. I said that the heart of Mr. Long was as hard as the neither milestone. Terew, when, on that eventfooil trile, he riz up for me, an fit down my fiendish prosecooter, an gently tetched him up on the roar by that tremenjuous outbust abeout the babby ; when all that was a happenin, I did think I'd a leetle mis-jedged him. But did I ? No. I come to show a parient's gratitood by presentin before him my

most perecious treasoor. An what was the result? What? Why, he met me with his habitooil hard-heartedness. I found him stiff as a marbial statoot, cold an freezin as a icicle, rugged an onfeelin as a rocky precipious!"

As he ended, he rose from his chair. The boys now gathered about him, and asked him to come up to Bart's room, just overhead, and let them see his infant. They addressed consoling words to him, and sought to smooth down his ruffled feelings.

But Captain Corbet shook his head.

"No, boys," said he, "thankee kindly. You're all right, — 'tain't you, 'tain't your fault, — but I feel sore. There's somethin oppressive in this here intellectooil atmosphiour. I must seek elsewhere for comfort to my ruffled busom. Thankee kindly, boys. Some other time, not now — some other time."

Saying this, the aged captain left the room, and descended the stairs, and took his departure. The boys watched his venerable figure till it paased out of sight; and the slow pace, and bent head, and mournful mood of their beloved navigator touched all their hearts with a common feeling of sympathy.

As Captain Corbet's retreating figure disappeared from view, the boys turned away, and walked slowly along the front of the Academy, with a vague idea of taking a walk up to the

camp. But before they had gone any great distance they met Dr. Porter.

"Boys," said he, "you'll be glad to know that your French relics are all labelled, and are now ready to be taken to the Museum."

"May we take them there, sir?"

"O, yes."

"When?"

"Now, if you like. I'll go back to the house, and let you have them."

Saying this the doctor turned back towards the house, followed by the boys.

They found the articles all neatly labelled, and their names written upon each label as discoverers and donors. All looked delighted except Bart. He read the label on the bone, and there was an expression on his face which did not escape the notice of the doctor.

"What's the matter, Bart?" he asked. "You don't seem pleased."

"Why, sir," said Bart, "I didn't think that this bone belonged to — to *that*."

"Why, what did you think that it did belong to?"

"Well, sir, I thought that it belonged to the owner of the house."

"The owner of the house!" said the doctor, with a laugh. "Well, not directly. It belonged to his horse, as I think, but Mr. Simmons thinks it was his cow. That is the only way in which it ever belonged to him."

Bart looked ineffably disgusted.

"Then it's no use putting an old cow bone in the Museum," said he.

"O, yes," said the doctor. "It was found beside the plough, and perhaps belonged to the horse or ox that dragged it. From that point of view it is a very interesting relic."

Bart said no more, and soon the boys retired on their way to the Museum, bearing their treasures with them.

"Boys," said Bruce, "it will never do for us to carry these things up without making some demonstration or other. It isn't every day that we are presenting things to the Museum that we've dug out of the ground."

"That's a capital idea," cried Bart, who by this time had recovered from the shock of his disappointment.

"So I say," said Arthur; "but what shall we do?"

"O, let's have a speech, and a poem, and a procession," said Phil.

"Yes," said Tom, "Bruce can make the speech, and Bart can make the poem."

This was agreed upon, and it was decided that the ceremony should come off immediately before tea-time. They had an hour yet, and that gave them ample time. Soon the news spread abroad, and all the boys flocked to the spot. Bruce as-

cended the portico, and stood there with the French relics at his feet.

Bruce had not had much time for preparation; but then he was very quick at impromptu speeches, and the occasion did not demand anything more than this. Bart stood near, scribbling something in his memorandum-book.

After arranging the things in an effective row, and putting all the coins inside the iron pot, Bruce commenced.

Holding up the iron pot, and rattling the coins, he began by giving a humorous description of their search after it. Without going very deeply into the real particulars of the case, he introduced into his burlesque narrative quite a number of the actual facts. After finishing this description, he showed the identical pot of money which they had exhumed, and it was passed round from hand to hand.

Bruce then exhibited the ploughshare, and the other irons. The plough, he assured them, belonged to the first settler on this classic spot. The bolts had fastened it together, and the chain had drawn it through the ground. It was this plough, of which these were the interesting relics, that had reclaimed the hill from its original wilderness state, and made possible the existence of that great and glorious school to which they at present had the proud privilege of belonging.

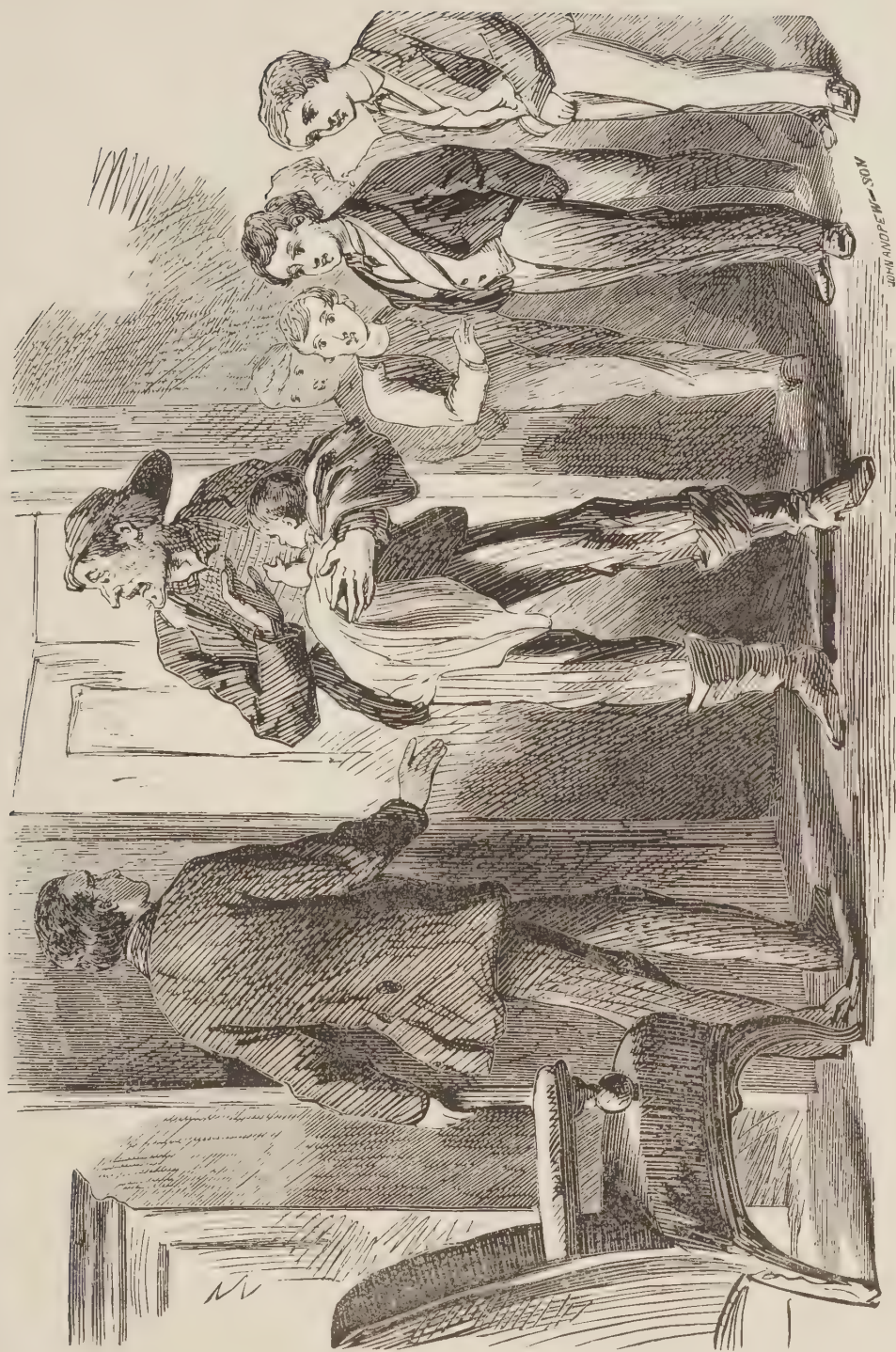
Finally, he exhibited the bone. Dr. Porter, he said, thought it was the bone of a horse; while Mr. Simmons thought that it once had belonged to a cow, or perhaps an ox. For his part, he had a theory of his own. He thought that it was the bone of that nightmare that had been making such a disturbance among them during the last week. That bone was now going into the Museum, and he was confident that the peculiar animal to which it belonged would never trouble the school again.

As Bruce ended, he was greeted with three cheers. Three more followed for the plough; three for the pot of money; and three for the bone.

After this, Bart arose with his memorandum-book, in which he had been diligently scribbling.

"Gentlemen," said he, "after the able, polished, elegant, eloquent, ornate, and thoroughly exhaustive address from my learned friend, who has just sat down, it would be quite out of my power to say anything. Besides, I'm appointed to give the poem. The subject is connected with one of the articles before us. I mean the bone. Dr. Porter has one theory; Mr. Simmons another; my learned friend has a third. For my part, I have my own theory, which I adopted at the moment of its discovery, and which I still maintain. This, gentlemen, is the subject of my poem."

After which Bart read the following from his memorandum-book: —



CAPTAIN CORBET'S GRIEF. — Page 291.

"THE TRUE THEORY OF THE BONE.

- "O, I'm the bone of a Parley Voo
That settled in Minas Bay,
That dammed the marshes, and cleared the woods,
And called the place Grand Pré.
- "And the grain it riz, and the settlement growed,
And werry content were we,
With our cattle and pigs, and hosses and gigs,
And beautiful scenerie.
- "And there it was nothing but *Nong-tong-paw*,
Et cetera, from morning to night,
And *Mercy, madame*, and *Wee, moo-soo*, —
We were all so werry polite.
- "But the Britishers came, and druv us off;
So I took to my heels, and ran,
And one of them chased me, and quick I went
For rather an elderly man.
- "And he had a gun, and I had none;
And he fired that gun at me;
And he shot my leg, and off it dropped,
Which was rather a bother, you see.
- "But I seized my leg, and I hopped away,
As quick as quick could be,
And the Britisher loaded his gun agin,
For another shot at me.
- "But I dodged the Britisher in the woods,
And took the leg that was shot,
And buried it under the apple tree,
In this werry identical spot.
- "And I'm the werry identical bone
Of the leg of the Parley Voo
That was buried beneath the apple tree,
And dug up again by you!"

This closed the proceedings.

A procession was then formed, headed by the "B. O. W. C.," who led the way to the Museum.

There they deposited the exhumed Acadian relics; and, if they haven't been taken away, they're lying there still.

X X I I.

The Boys in the Museum. — The Doctor's Lecture.
— *The Acadians. — Louisbourg. — A Journey*
to the Wharf. — The Antelope. — Captain Pratt.

HE presence of Dr. Porter in the Museum repressed to some extent the merriment of the boys, and the newly-arrived articles were deposited in a conspicuous place, where they could not fail to attract attention. The Museum had grown up slowly under the joint care of the doctor and Mr. Simmons, the former of whom devoted himself to the archæological, and the latter to the mineralogical department. With each of these gentlemen it was a hobby. The delight of the doctor at these exhumed French relics has already been described ; and, at the present time, their formal assignment to their proper location here served to stimulate his enthusiasm, and started him off upon a favorite theme of his — the exiled Acadians. About these he had much to say. He showed all the relics which he had slowly accumulated here ; he told many stories of discoveries of

his own; and finally, going to a small chest, he drew forth some papers.

"I promised to show you some of these," said he, "when we were over on the North Mountain. Everything in the banishment of the Acadians was hard and harsh, and cannot be thought of now without indignation. Not the least repulsive thing about this business is the way in which they were sent off. Many people suppose that they were sent away in the large ships of the British fleet. That was not the case. They were packed in a number of small vessels hired at Boston; most of them were schooners. The whole thing was taken under contract by a Boston firm — Messrs. Apthorp & Hancock. All their bills which they sent in to the Nova Scotia government are now in the archives, and I have copies of them. See; here is one for a specimen."

And he showed the following, which the boys passed from hand to hand:—

MESSRS. APTHORP & HANCOCK,

TO ZEBAD FORMAN, DR.

To hire of sloop Dolphin, myself master, from 25th August to 20th February, 1756, is 5 months 26 days @ £46 8 pr month.	£272 .4.3
For a Pilot as pr charter party @ 60s pr month. .	17.12.0
To carrying 56 neutralls more than his comp't of two to a ton, @ 9s pr two Halifax curr'y £12 12 0 is lawful money per Captain Murray's directions.	15 .2.5
	£304.18.8

To cash paid for Provisions at Maryland to supply 230 French neutralls after the Provisions rec'd of Mr. Saul was expended.

18.2.28. Flour @ 14s	£41 .2.0
14.2.15. Bread @ 18s	13 .3.2
11.2.26. Beef and Pork @ 20s	11.14.8
1 cord Wood	0.14.0
Pd for water at Hampton	0 .2.6
For a Protest.	0.10.0
Two journeys from Lower Marlbro to Annapolis by Gov's order	4 .0.0
	71 .6.4
In dollars at 7s 6d makes lawful money @ 6s	57 .1.1
	£361.19.9

"Ah, boys," said the doctor, mournfully, "how much of human anguish may we read there! how many broken hearts! how much despair appears before us in those remorseless figures! Think of the name of Hancock being associated with a thing like that. "Neutralls" they were—two hundred and thirty "neutralls" at so much per head. Perhaps among those poor exiles, contracted for at so much per head by that Boston firm, there was some Evangeline looking over the sea, with her white lips and her eyes of despair.

"Still," continued the doctor, after some silence, "the English didn't have it all their own way. There were several occasions in which the Acadians were able to baffle them. One place was at the head of the Bay of Fundy, the River Pelilcodiac. Here the French were in league with the Indians,

as indeed they were throughout the whole of Canada and Acadie; and when a detachment of troops was sent there to capture them, they retreated to the woods. The troops made a descent at one place, where they found twenty-five women and children. These they were merciless enough to make prisoners. Then they went through the country devastating it, and seeking thus to ruin the poor fugitives. It was villanous work. They burned more than two hundred and fifty houses and a church. At last the French made an attack on them, and they were forced to retreat. Had the French shown a little more enterprise, they could have destroyed them; as it was, the troops got off without much loss. There was another instance when the French got the better of their enemies. It was a vessel that was carrying over two hundred of them from Annapolis to Carolina. The French rose, and got command of the vessel, and put into the River St. John. The English heard of it, and sent a vessel after them with British soldiers disguised as French. But the fugitives discovered the trick, and not being able to cope with their enemies, they set fire to the vessel, and escaped to the woods.

There was a great deal of abominable cruelty in different parts. Wherever they could not make prisoners, they burned their houses, in the hope of starving them to death. Whole districts were thus devastated. The descendants of these peo-

ple remember all this yet, and can tell many a tale of misery. Many of the exiles gradually worked their way back, and found new homes for themselves in other parts of the country, and their descendants are scattered all about the coasts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. They are curiously like their ancestors. Simple, innocent, joyous, peaceful, there is but little crime among them; and though they are not so progressive as we are, yet they have other qualities which may compensate for the absence of our more practical faculties. They are certainly very stationary; so much so, indeed, that some acute observers declare that they have not advanced so much as their kindred in France. They say that our Acadians are more like the French peasantry of a hundred years ago than the French themselves are at the present day. This is particularly the case in the more remote districts, such as the Bay de Chaleur. I have often been there myself, and every time I visit one of their villages in that district, I recall some of the descriptions of the Grand Pré Acadians in Longfellow's *Evangeline*."

Here the doctor began to tell some anecdotes, and then went on speaking of other things, until at length he stopped in front of a rusty cannon-ball, which lay on a table in the middle of the room.

"Here," said he, "is something which I re-

ceived a few days ago, and I think it is almost equal to the Acadian plough."

"What is it?"

"It's a cannon-ball from Louisbourg; and though I don't know, of course, for certain, yet I have made up my mind that it is a relic of the first siege."

"How can you tell, sir," asked Bruce, "whether it is the first siege or the second."

"O, for that matter, I can't tell at all very clearly; only the spot where this was found makes it more likely to have been fired at the first than the second. Besides, the first siege is far more interesting to us, since it was the act of British Provincials, and an exploit quite unparalleled in its way."

"Why, sir, I always thought that the second siege was one of the greatest achievements in war. Were there any generals in the first equal to Wolfe, or any other men equal to Boscawen, and Rodney, and Amherst?"

"I'm glad you put it in that way," replied the doctor. "No; in the first expedition there are no names so brilliant as these. Pepperell was a merchant, and a colonel in the militia. Whether that makes his exploit the more glorious or not, I leave you to judge. But this much is true, that about the first siege there was a reckless dash, and gallantry, and romantic heroism which we cannot find in the second. Mind you, it was all the work

of a lot of farmers, fresh from the plough, raw militia, and how they could get such a plan into their heads I cannot imagine. I have often thought that it was their very ignorance that emboldened them. It was principally the work of Massachusetts, though the other New England Provinces took some share in it. The idea was started there, and the governor took it up very earnestly. So they raised four thousand men and a fleet of thirteen vessels, which was a wonderful thing to be done by so thinly peopled and so young a community. At first they intended to have the coöperation of the British fleet, but the commodore declined; and it was only after he had sailed to Boston under orders from the British government, and found the New England expedition gone, that he followed them, and so took part in it; for Governor Shirley and the New England militiamen resolved to go on, whether the commodore helped them or not; and so they did go on. But it was all right in the end, for the British fleet came up with them, and they went on in company to their destination.

“They landed at Gabarus Bay, south of Louisbourg, and behind the town. It was the thirtieth of April, very early in the season, cold and foggy. The French were there already to dispute the landing, but they outwitted them most dexterously. It was cold, and boisterous, and foggy, as I have said, and never did any men have harder work in

getting their arms and stores on shore; but all this was accomplished at last. The next day, Major Vaughn, with four hundred men, went past the city up to the harbor, and set on fire some warehouses. They made a great smoke, and the soldiers in the Royal Battery, one of the chief works, spiked the guns, and fled in a panic. On the following day, Vaughn, with thirteen men, came near the fort, and, as it seemed to be deserted, they advanced cautiously, and finally entered it. They hadn't any flag; so one of the soldiers climbed the flag-staff with his red coat in his teeth, and nailed this to the staff as a flag. Vaughn then sent word to General Pepperell, 'May it please your honor to be informed that, by the grace of God and the courage of thirteen men, I entered the Royal Battery about nine o'clock, and am waiting for reënforcements.' But before reënforcements could come, the French at Louisbourg had seen them, and sent a hundred men in boats to regain possession. Vaughn and his men, however, were ready for them, and the little band gave them so warm a reception, that they actually drove them back, and held possession till reënforcements came. Then the Royal Battery's guns were remounted, some new ones brought, and all these were turned upon the city, and this battery did not a little towards the final capture.

"It strikes me that this was an uncommonly plucky thing to do," continued the doctor, "and

this incident is but one among many. The whole siege is full of such exploits. The character of the besieging army was odd in the extreme. The lads worked like oxen at their duties, toiling away in the surf, and in the swamp, and in the woods, and yet at the same time presenting an appearance of disorder that was shocking to the martinets who were present. In front they fought like tigers, but in the rear each man did what seemed right in his own eyes. In front there was bombarding; in the rear frolicking, racing, wrestling, and pitching quoits, running after the shot from the fortress, so as to get the bounty that was offered. These honest lads knew nothing at all about engineering, or regular approaches. The engineers who were present spoke of parallels and zigzags; but the militiamen laughed at what they called their outlandish gibberish, and made their approaches to the enemy in their own homespun way. How do you think they contrived to do it? Why, by making a bold advance by night, and throwing up an earthwork, and intrenching themselves before morning. In this way they continued their advance, to the utter confusion of the professional engineers. The fact is, the audacity of pure courage meets with astonishing successes. *L'audace, l'audace toujours l'audace*, is a French saying, which was exemplified before the eyes of Frenchmen throughout all this first siege. The commandant at Louisbourg thought

there was an army of thirteen thousand men besieging him, and all the time the army amounted to less than four thousand farmers.

“And so the men carried on their siege, with their valor and their laughter, their heroism and their sport, their sufferings and their mirth; fighting in front, frolicking in the rear; enjoying life like boys, but facing death like men. And that was the way they took Louisbourg. When the gallant fellows marched into the stronghold which they had captured, then first they seemed to have an adequate idea of their undertaking. They looked around upon the formidable batteries, the granite walls, the intricate gate-ways, and the mighty ramparts, and were half appalled at the immensity of their success. And, indeed, the success may well be called immense. It was a wonderful thing, when we think who it was that achieved it. The success is all the more striking when we consider the vast preparations that were made for the second siege. That second siege does not seem to me to be at all equal to the first in point of romantic interest; and then again, the fact that there was a second siege is of itself a stigma on the British government, for so readily giving back to the French what had been so gallantly won. The blood of those brave fellows had all been shed in vain; the work had all to be done over again, and more blood had to be shed before that mistake could be rectified. But when that

mistake was rectified, and Louisbourg was taken a second time, there was a very different minister at the head of affairs; the struggle with the French was begun on a gigantic scale, and did not end until the French power on this continent had been crushed under the ruins of Quebec."

With these words the doctor ended his remarks; and as it was now late, the boys all retired to their respective rooms, where they passed the remainder of the evening in study.

It usually takes several days for boys to settle down fairly to school work at the beginning of any new term; and so, after this vacation, it was some time before the school work could be fairly grappled with. The remembrance of the events of the past days was strong in the minds of all, and for a time prevented that application which was desirable. A stronger effort than usual was required in order to force the mind to its task, and a longer time was needed in order to master that task.

On the third day after the school had recommenced, the boys of the B. O. W. C. were discussing the important question of the disposal of their time for that afternoon. School was already over. The other boys had scattered in different directions; some to the dike lands, some to the fields, and some to the woods.

"Where shall we go, boys?" asked Bart.

"To the woods," said Phil.

"To Gaspereaux," said Arthur.

"A game of cricket," said Tom.

"No, boys," said Bruce; "let's go down and see what's become of the old Antelope,"

"That's the idea," said Bart, "the glorious old Antelope. Let's have one last look at her. By this time, perhaps, she is half covered with mud. It was a soft place, I think, where she was lying, and she will soon be buried out of sight; so let's have one final look at her before we lose sight of her forever."

This proposal was in the highest degree satisfactory to the other boys, and soon they started down the road to the place where the Antelope lay. On reaching the place, they found that it was high tide, and the ill-fated schooner lay in the same place where they had seen her last, far over on her side, with her masts pointing downward. The tide had risen so high that it covered more than half of her, leaving only part visible. The upper parts of her masts also were covered. At such a melancholy spectacle the boys stood for some time in solemn silence. Another schooner lay not far away, at a wharf, but they felt no curiosity about her. All their thoughts were taken up with the Antelope.

"And so this is the end of her," said Bruce, solemnly.

"*Hic jacet*, as Captain Corbet said," remarked Phil.

"Who would have thought that her end was so near?" said Arthur.

"And think," said Tom, "of the old craft, after escaping so many perils, meeting her fate here at her own wharf."

"It's the old saying realized," said Bart, — the sailor shipwrecked within sight of home."

"But I say, Bart, she doesn't seem to have sunk any deeper in the mud — does she?" said Bruce.

"No," said Bart. "I expected by this time that she would be as deep as that in mud, not in water."

"She's afloat," said Tom.

"No, she isn't; she doesn't move," said Bruce.

"No; she's perfectly steady, and fixed in the mud," said Bart. "There's no floating about her."

"She'll break up soon, I suppose," said Phil.

"O, I don't know," said Bart. "If she were exposed to a heavy sea she would; but here in this quiet harbor she will either sink altogether in the mud, or else lie rotting away for years, a mournful and melancholy spectacle."

While the boys were looking thus sadly upon the schooner, a man emerged from the cabin of the other vessel at the wharf, and going ashore, proceeded as though on his way to the village. The boys did not notice this man till he was close to them, and then there was a shout of joyful recognition.

"Captain Pratt!"

Yes, that stout, bluff, red-faced, jovial captain

stood there before their eyes, evincing as much pleasure at the sight of them, as they did at the sight of him. He wrung their hands heartily all round, laughing all the time, and asking them how they got home, and whether they ran ashore more than a dozen times in doing so.

"I come here," said he, "arter taters. I got a tater freight to Boston, and I'm goin to fill up right straight off. And it's right glad I am to see you all again. I thought mebbe I'd see some of you over here, and come here instead of goin to another place where I could have got a better freight."

The captain was very voluble, very noisy, and very jolly. He made all the boys come on board his vessel, and give an account of their adventures after leaving him. They did so, and he listened with deep attention, varied from time to time by peals of laughter.

"Wal, boys," said he at last, "I'm a goin right straight off to Boston as soon as I get my cargo in. Ain't there any of you that wants to go? I'll take any of you, or all of you. Come now."

The boys thanked him, but excused themselves, and explained that they couldn't go very easily, as the school had now begun, and they were all hard at work at their studies.

"Sorry for that," said Captain Pratt. "I'm too late, I see. Perhaps I'll have another chance with you. At any rate, I'll promise you a better vessel

than the one you had on your cruise. Of all the old tubs — But where is she now. Has Corbet got a tater freight?"

At this question the boys said nothing, but looked silently and with melancholy glances over the stern to where the form of the Antelope was half visible above the water. Captain Pratt saw their glances.

"What craft's that there?" he asked.

"That," said Bart, "is the gallant craft that you just asked about — the one that we had in our cruise — the Antelope."

"That!" cried Captain Pratt; and starting up, he walked astern, and took a long look at the schooner. The boys followed him. They said nothing, but looked at the Antelope along with Captain Pratt.

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XXIII.

Inspection of the Schooner. — Captain Pratt to the Rescue. — His Engines and his Industry. — Up she rises! — Who'll go for Captain Corbet?

CAPTAIN Pratt was the first to break the silence.

“Wal,” said he, at last, “whar’s Corbet?”

“He’s home.”

“Home? Why don’t he do something?”

“Why, what can he do?”

“Do? Everything.”

“He says the schooner’s lost.”

“Lost!”

“Yes.”

“Did he say so himself?”

“He said the schooner was ‘a gone sucker.’

Those were his own words.”

“And didn’t he try to do anything?”

“No.”

“What — didn’t even try?”

“No.”

“Wal, I declare! I never did think that Corbet had much brains; but this beats everything.

To go and let his schooner go to destruction in this way, and not even try to save her, is a little beyond what I expected even of *him*. But how did it happen?"

The boys told him.

"And so," said Captain Pratt, "he came here next day, and found the schooner lying here, and did nothing — jest sot down and lamented over her. Why, what's the man made of? He's about the only man I ever heard of that could sit still and see his property perish."

"But all the people in the village thought it was lost."

"Of course. If he said so, they believed him. If he did nothing, why should they try to do anything? If a man won't help himself, you don't suppose other people's goin to help him — do you?"

"And do you think, after all, that she could have been saved?"

"Course she could."

"And she wasn't lost?"

"Course she wasn't."

"Could she be saved now?"

"Course she can."

"What! and she isn't lost, after all?"

"Course she isn't."

At this astounding intelligence the boys looked at one another in silent amazement.

"Why, look here," said Captain Pratt; "what

happened to that there schooner often happens to others. It's a mighty unpleasant thing to happen; but schooners do get over it, after all. I've helped friends out of similar scrapes, and have sot several schooners right side up in worse places than this. There's nothing so very bad about this. The position is a good one for working in, too; and the mud here isn't so soft as it is in other places around here by a long chalk. But whatever got into Corbet's head I can't imagine. It beats me."

"Can you really save her then, after all — you yourself?"

"Course I can — only not single-handed. I'd want some help."

"And *will* you?"

"Course I will, with the above proviso. Captain Pratt's a man that's always ready to help a neighbor, and though this here neighbor doesn't seem altogether inclined to help himself, yet I'm ready to do what I can."

At the generous offer of Captain Pratt the joy of the boys was inexpressible. They at once poured forth a torrent of questions as to when he could begin his work, and where, and how, and what they could do to help him, and whether they could do anything at all; which questions being all asked at once could not be immediately answered.

"You see, boys," said Captain Pratt, "I'll need some help."

"We'll do what we can."

"That's right. I'll have to rely on you. I've only got two men in the schooner, and we can't do all. If you know any men about the village, send them or bring them along. Send for Corbet, too."

"O, we want to have it all done without Captain Corbet knowing anything about it till it's all over."

"Why not let him come, and take his share in the work?"

"O, it would be better fun to get him down here, and let him see his vessel afloat."

"Fun, you call it! Wal, I won't dispute about words. At any rate, it ought to teach him a lesson."

"But when can we begin?—now?"

"Now?" replied Captain Pratt, with a smile. "Wal—hardly—not just now, I should say. You see the vessel's partly in the mud, and a good deal in the water, and it would be rather difficult to get at her so as to go to work."

"How long will it be before we can begin?"

"Not till the tide leaves her."

"That will be after dark."

"Yes, this evening; but to-morrow morning the tide will be out, and everything can be done then."

"But then we shall be in school."

"So you will. Well, it'll have to be managed without you. But, after all, you won't be wanted till the evening. My men and I can do all the fixins. We'll get everything ready when the

tide is out, and then in the evening, when you come, you will be able to help without getting up to your eyes in mud."

"O, well, we'll all be down."

"How many can you muster? A dozen boys like you will be enough."

"O, we can muster more than that, if you wish it. We will bring down the whole school."

"All right then. You see it will be about eight men's work. I and my men make three, and you lads ought to make up the rest. It'll be mostly pullin that you'll be wanted for."

"Pulling?"

"Yes — histin. I'll rig some tackle for you. Besides, I'll have to get the vessel clear of mud at low tide. There can't be much in her here."

"Why, we thought, from what Captain Corbet said, that by this time she would be sunk so deep that she would be half buried in the mud, and half full of it."

"Nonsense! The mud just here on this slope isn't very deep. Six or eight inches of mud is about all she'd sink in. Two or three hours' work will clear all that away, and then all that is left for us to do is to get her right side up, and I'll rig the tackle for that."

"I must say, Captain Pratt," said Bart, "it's uncommonly good in you to take so much time and trouble."

"O, as for that," said Captain Pratt, "neighbors

must be neighborly, and seafarin men most so. Besides, I hain't got anything in particular to do to-morrow, and I'd like very well to turn a hand to this. But I don't see yet why Corbet should go and be such a precious old goose. The vessel ain't worth much, but she's worth settin right side up; that I'll maintain."

The captain then proceeded to explain his plan of action to the boys more minutely, so that at last they perceived how very simple and feasible it was, and wondered now that Captain Corbet should have given up his vessel so readily, without making any effort, where an effort would have been so very easy.

"I understand now, I think," said Bart, "why Captain Corbet gave up the vessel. It was the babby. He wanted to be able to devote himself altogether to his domestic cares."

After spending some further time the boys took their departure, with the understanding that they were to return on the following day after school, with all the boys that they could muster.

By seven o'clock on the following morning, Captain Pratt was at work at the Antelope. The tide had retreated far enough to allow of an investigation of her condition, though the water which had filled her at the last tide had not run out of her. His first work was to bore a few auger holes along the lower part of her deck, to let all the water run out. The Antelope was not, after all, so very deep

in the mud as had been supposed by the boys. It had covered her taffrail some inches, but this could be shovelled away without any very severe exertion; and it was to this that Captain Pratt and his men first directed their energies. Two hours' work sufficed for them to clear away all this, after which they turned their attention to other things. First of all, as the water had now run out, Captain Pratt stopped up the auger holes tightly, and then prepared to close the hatchways. This was a work of extreme difficulty. The hatches which belonged to the schooner had floated away long ago, and it was necessary to make new ones. This was at length done by working up some stuff that was on board Captain Pratt's vessel, which they then proceeded to fasten to the hatchways of the Antelope. The position in which the schooner lay made it excessively difficult. She was on her side on a slope in such a way that her deck overhung them somewhat as they worked, so that they labored at a great disadvantage; however, they persevered, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing that the new hatches were fastened in with sufficient firmness to suit their purposes, and were judged to be sufficiently water-tight for the present emergency.

The work thus far, important though it was, had been essentially preliminary; and now the machinery had to be arranged for the immediate work of raising the fallen vessel to her proper position. Captain Pratt and his men took a number of spars

from their schooner, and selecting three of them, bound their ends together, and stood these three like a tripod, as near to the schooner as possible, and close by the foremast. Three more bound together in a similar way were placed near the mainmast. From the top of each of these a tackle-block was suspended, and a line also was passed from each, and run around a tree which stood about a dozen yards away from the edge of the bank. Another line passed from each tackle-block, and was fastened around each mast of the schooner.

Captain Pratt's design was now evident.

First of all he had cleared away the mud that had covered the taffrail of the schooner, and emptied her of water; then he had battened down the hatches so that at the next rising tide no water should enter her; and finally he had rigged the tackle-blocks so as to hoist up the schooner to an erect position by means of the united efforts of all that could be mustered. But the schooner, as she now lay, could not be raised by such means. It was necessary to have additional help, and that help was to be found in the rising tide. When the water should rise so as to be deep enough for the schooner to float in, the task of pulling her up to an erect position would be comparatively easy.

Captain Pratt's labors were energetically performed, and finally, just as he had completed his tackle arrangements, the tide began to flow around the schooner.

In another hour the water was high around her; still another, and the tide was at its fullest height, and Captain Pratt began to look anxiously for the boys.

Meanwhile the boys on the hill had all heard of the proposed enterprise, and, from the largest to the smallest, were filled with intense excitement. They chafed impatiently against the restraints of the school, and waited with extreme difficulty for the closing hour. At last it came; and then, with loud shouts, and screams, and laughter, the whole school set off at a run for the scene of action, which they reached just as Captain Pratt began to feel impatient.

“Hooray!” shouted the gallant captain, as he saw them pouring down towards the wharf. “Here you are, — and lots of you, too. You’re just in time, too. The tide’s up, the tackle is rigged, and all we’ve got to do now is to go to work.

The boys looked hastily around, and though they could not see all that had been done, yet they could comprehend the purpose of the tackle which they saw before them, and had no doubt whatever that the undertaking would be perfectly successful.

“Now, boys,” said Captain Pratt, “you can’t all bear a hand, but you small boys’ll have to be satisfied with lookin on. I’ll choose the biggest to help me, and show you where you’ve got to pull.”

Saying this, he selected from among the boys

Bruce, Arthur, Bart, Tom, Phil, Jiggins, Muckle, Sammy Ram Ram, Johnny Blue, Billymack, Bogud, and Pat, and these he stationed at the tackle which was attached to the foremast, while he himself and his two men went to the lines which were attached to the mainmast.

“Now, boys,” said he, “it’s no use to pull every which way. Pull together as I give the word. Mind — it’s a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together. I’ll sing, and you pull at the chorus — that’s the way.”

Saying this, Captain Pratt burst forth with a rude song, which was, —

“Up she rises;
 Hi ho, cheerly, men!
 Heave her up;
 Hi ho, cheerly, men!
 All together;
 Hi ho, cheerly, men!
 Heave with a will;
 Hi ho, cheerly, men!”

And at every cry, “Hi ho, cheerly, men,” Captain Pratt and his men gave a pull, and the boys, watching him, pulled also. At first they were a little irregular, but they soon caught the time, and pulled as regularly as the men. And thus, with a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together, they sought to raise up the fallen schooner.

The schooner felt it. Already the mud had been detached from its grasp, and the water which flowed around formed an additional assistant, buoying it

up, and supporting it as they pulled. The clinging mud was the only thing to contend with. The first pull loosened its hold somewhat, the second and third did this still more, and finally the fourth raised the masts above the surface of the water. Again and again they pulled, and higher and higher came the masts, until at last, when high up in the air, all further pulling was rendered unnecessary by the schooner, which threw herself upon her keel in the water, and thus righted herself of her own accord. She did not sit very fair, it is true, for the mud which had accumulated on one side of her hold gave her a lop-sided appearance; but that mattered little to the boys. It was enough triumph to them that she was afloat, and so they celebrated their triumph in long, loud cheers.

Having thus righted the schooner, Captain Pratt prepared to secure her in a proper manner.

“We’ve righted her, boys,” said he, “and now let’s take care that she shan’t be wronged.”

With this end in view, lines were fastened from the schooner to the shore, and Captain Pratt finally pronounced her free from danger.

The boys now crowded around the Antelope to see what marks she bore of her late calamities. There she floated before them, her masts and rigging plastered with mud, yet afloat, and able once more to plough the seas after her own fashion. A few among them managed to scramble on board,

the righted schooner. The scene around was not particularly attractive. The mud still clung close to the deck and rigging, and even Captain Pratt's work around the hatches was already coated over with thick slime. The scene was not an attractive one, and they did not remain there long.

"She wants cleanin'," remarked Captain Pratt, after a long survey, — "that's a fact; an what's more, she wants corkin'" — no doubt, — an a good coat o' tar. She wants new spars, an riggin, an chains, an anchors, — a new deck, too, and pumps wouldn't be out of the way; and for that matter, while they were about it, they might as well put a new hull onto her. By that time she'd be fit to carry taters, and Corbet might make a little money out of her. But it would cost a good bit to do all that, and so I dar say Corbet'll sail her as she stands, — if he sails her at all. Arter all, he might as well, bein as she's jest as good now as ever she was. She never was much; but then she's been lucky, and did well enough for Corbet. It would be kind of onnateral to see him aboard of any other craft than this here."

"Boys," said Bart, "something ought to be done in honor of this great occasion; and above all, we ought to make up some way to bring Corbet face to face with his restored Antelope. Shall we tell him at once, and let him come down?"

"No, let's leave it till he finds out. Let's give him a shock of surprise."

"But how will we know anything about his surprise, unless we are here on the spot at that great meeting between Corbet and his lost but restored schooner?"

"O, we'll have to manage it so as to be here when he comes down to see it."

"We ought to arrange some plan."

"Shall we let him know what has happened, or get him to come down here for something else?"

"O, we ought to get him to come for something else, and then his surprise will be all the greater."

"But what else?"

"That we'll have to think over."

"We ought to make haste about it, then."

"Yes, we ought to decide before the end of the week."

"The end of the week! Nonsense! Why not to-day?"

"To-day?"

"Of course. Now's the time. We must get him down to-day, while we're all here. If we don't, he'll be certain to hear all about it before to-morrow from some one else."

"Yes, of course."

"To-day's the time."

"Yes, to-day. We're all here. I want to see the meeting. I wouldn't lose the sight for anything."

"Well — what shall we get up to bring him here?"

"O, let's send word that Captain Pratt wants to see him on very particular business."

"That won't bring him, especially if he's got the babby. He wouldn't come down before when the business was still more important."

"We couldn't send some word about a potato freight, I suppose."

"No, for three reasons; first, because it isn't the truth; secondly, because he believes that he has no schooner; and thirdly, because he is indifferent to potato freights."

"Well, what shall we tell him, then?"

This conversation went on, every one speaking at once; but no one being able to think of any plausible message to send to Captain Corbet which should be true, and at the same time not disclose the actual facts. At last they concluded that it was impossible to make up such a message; and as the time was passing, they determined to send for him at all hazards.

But who would go?

Pat at once offered, much to the relief of all the others, who wanted to be on the spot when Captain Corbet arrived. Pat, however, was very good-natured, and didn't at all mind the long walk, but promised to be back in an hour, along with Captain Corbet.

"Don't tell him about the schooner, unless you have to," said Bruce.

"Sure an what'll I tell him, thin?"

“O, tell him anything at all, so long as it’s the truth, and no humbug, you know. Just tell him in a general way something or other.”

“Somethin or other in a gineral way?” repeated Pat.

“Yes, something that’ll make him come down, you know; and don’t tell him about the schooner, unless you have to.”

“Deed, thin, an I won’t. I’ll tell him somethin in gineral, an nothin in particular.”

“But no humbug, you know.”

“No — surely not; it’s mesilf that won’t.”

And with these words Pat took himself off.

XXIV.

Argument between Pat and Captain Corbet. — Meeting between Captain Corbet and the Antelope. — Pat alone with the Baby. — Corbet becomes an Exile, and vanishes into a Fog Bank.

PAT walked briskly, and in due time arrived at Captain Corbet's house. He knocked at the door.

"Come in," said a voice.

He entered, and found himself face to face with the one whom he wished to see. The aged navigator was seated near a cradle, gently tilting the rocker with his foot, and thus giving to it an easy and agreeable motion. There was a smile of peace on Corbet's mild countenance, which deepened into a smile of welcome as he recognized Pat.

"Why, how d'ye dew?" he exclaimed. "Railly, I'm delighted to see you. Take a cheer."

"Thank ye, kindly," said Pat; "but it's a hurry I'm in, and I've jist brought a message for you from the b'ys."

"The boys?"

"Yis. They want you at the wharf."

"Me?"

"Yis; it's dyin to see you they are."

"The boys — dyin to see me at the wharf?" repeated Captain Corbet, slowly.

"It's that same they are doin, and they sint me to bring you down."

"Wal, that's a pity, now," said Captain Corbet. "I'm railly pained. I wish I could go. But you see the old 'oman's out: gone to see a nevey of hern that's jest took down with the influenzy, an I'm alone, an' got to take car' of the babby."

"Ah, sure now an ye must go," said Pat, entreatingly. "Look at me; sure an didn't I run all the way up from the wharf for ye."

"Wal, railly now, I'd do anythin to oblige the boys, but you see thar's the babby, a delicate creatur, an' the old 'oman away. But what do the boys want to see me for?"

"Sure, an it's for matthers av the greatest importance intoirely, so it is."

"But thar's no use for me to go down, I tell you. You go down, and get them to come up."

"Och, sure an the businiss won't allow thim to come up at all, at all."

"O, yes, it will. 'Tain't likely they have anything so dreadful important but what some of them can come here."

"But I tell ye this businiss must be transacted on the wharf," said Pat, earnestly. "It's on the wharf it must be done, so it is."

“ The wharf? I don’t see that exactly. What is the business? ”

“ Why, why — it’s — it’s a kind av a — a — tis-
timonial, sure; an there you have it.”

“ A testimonial? — raily — wal, now, that’s rail
kind. But couldn’t the boys come up here — or
postpone it? ”

“ Sorra a bit of that same culd they do,” said
Pat. “ It’s all got to be done on the wharf, and
this evenin so it has.”

“ On the wharf? ”

“ Sure, it’s jist that same, so it is.”

“ An this evenin? ”

“ Sorra a time else.”

“ What kin it be? ” said Captain Corbet, medita-
tively, lost in wonder at the mystery that sur-
rounded Pat’s message. He leaned his head upon
his hand, while his foot still jogged the cradle, and
sat for a time lost in thought.

But Pat’s impatience could not endure the delay.

“ O, come along,” said he, “ sure it’s all one to
you.”

“ But I can’t,” said the captain. “ You forget
the babby.”

“ I’ll tell you what to do,” said Pat, as a bright
thought struck him; “ bring the baby wid you.”

Captain Corbet stared for a moment at Pat in
silent horror.

“ What!” he cried, “ bring *him* with me! Ex-
pose that per-recious head to the evenin damp!
Why, d’ye think I’m made of *iron*? ”

Pat at this gave up, and began to despair of moving Corbet from his house.

"If ye o'ny knowed," said he, at last, resuming his effort,—"if ye o'ny knowed what it was, ye'd go fast enough."

"Knowed what it was? Why, didn't you say what it was?"

"Not me, sure."

"Yes, you did."

"Niver a bit of it."

"You said it was a testimonial."

"Well, an did I tell you what kind of a testimonial it wor? Not me."

"Wal, tell me now."

"Will ye go if I do?"

"How can I go?"

"Take the baby along wid ye, sure. It's aisy enough."

"That thar's not possible. I'll tell you. Wait, and p'aps the ole 'oman 'll be hum soon."

"Wait? But we can't wait. It must be done the night."

"What?"

"Sure, the businiss."

"The testimonial? Why can't it be kept?"

"You see, it's a kind av a present; something that ye'll value next to yer child, so ye will."

"Dew tell. Wal, now, raily; why, what upon airth *kin* that be?" said Captain Corbet, whose curiosity began to be more excited than it had hitherto been.

"I'm not allowed to tell," said Pat, mysteriously.

"Why, raily! Why, how extra partic'lar! But come now, tell a leetle of it."

"I can't," said Pat; "but if you want to know, ye must go to the wharf."

"Somethin'," mused Captain Corbet. "Somethin you say that I'll vally nex to my babby. Why, what upon airth *kin* it be? I declare I never was so cur'ous in my hull life; an you wun't tell."

"No," said Pat.

"Wun't?"

"No."

"Honor bright?"

"Honor bright."

"Wal, what *kin* I dew?" cried Captain Corbet. "I can't leave the infant's bedside. I couldn't take ten steps away, and leave him here. What *kin* I do?"

"I'll tell you," cried Pat, at last, after some silence, and with an air of desperate determination. "I'll stay wid him, and you go down."

"*You* stay?"

"Yis, mesilf. He's asleep. He won't wake. I'll rock him. It'll be all right. And you hurry down, an hurry back."

Captain Corbet looked a long time in doubt at Pat, meditating over this singular proposal.

"Wal," said he, at last, "raily — it's desput kind in you — but — a feyther's feelins — air des-

put delicate things — but as you say — he's asleep — bress his pooty face! — an he'll stay asleep — and you'll rock him — an watch over his infant slumbers. And I'm desput cur'ous — and so — why, railly, I declar' ef I hain't got half a mind to go — jest to please the boys."

"Do," said Pat, earnestly; "an make haste about it, too, for they're dyin wid impatience, so they are."

Captain Corbet gave an uneasy glance all around.

"Ah, come now, hurry up," urged Pat, "an don't be all night about it."

"I feel dreadful oneasy," said Captain Corbet, "about what I'm agoin for to do."

"Onaisy, is it? Nonsense! Won't I be here? Am I a Injin?"

"You'll be kerful then — will ye?" said Captain Corbet, anxiously.

"Sure an I will."

"An watch him?"

"Av coorse. But sure an he's sleepin like a lamb; he'll need no care or watchin."

"An you think I railly may ventoor, jest to please the boys."

"O, yis, av coorse; on'y don't wait any longer."

Captain Corbet drew a deep breath, as though to summon up all his fortitude for the ordeal before him.

"Wal," he said, "I will. I'll make the plunge. But be kerful; watch. An ef he stirs, rock him;

an ef he stirs more, rock him harder ; but ef he stirs more, so as to be likely to wake, you must sing to him ; an ef he actilly doos wake, then you'll have to take him up and nuss him. Ef he still contenoos to wail," — and here the captain's voice faltered, — "you must walk up and down with him ; ef he don't stop then, sing and play with the furni-toor ; and finally, ef nothin else'll quiet him, thar's his bowl an his blessed supper on the table, an you must feed him. But how can I bar to leave him, and trust all this to you — ?"

"O, nonsense !" cried Pat ; "sure an he won't wake at all, at all ; an if he does, I'll do everythin that you say, an more by the same token."

"You will ?"

"Av coorse."

"Then I think I may ventoor," said Captain Corbet.

"Do, an be quick. Ah, now, none of that," cried Pat, as the fond father stooped over the cradle of his infant. "Sure ye'll wake him, so ye will. Hurry off."

"Wal, I was just goin to kiss him — but p'aps I'd better not, — so I'll go."

And with these words Captain Corbet tore himself away from the cradle, and left the house.

He walked with rapid strides, yet his breast was a prey to contending feelings. On the one hand, he was exceedingly curious to know what it was that the boys had for him, and he was also

anxious to gratify them; but then, on the other hand, he was disturbed about his baby, and full of fear lest some evil might befall him during his absence. His progress, which at first was rapid, soon slackened, and then grew slower, and finally stopped altogether. He turned irresolutely, and looked back. But all was still. This encouraged him to resume his journey. Again and again he turned and looked back, and each time he was reassured. At last he descended the hill, and his home could no longer be seen. Even then he stopped, and looked back several times, as though he expected that a cry from his deserted infant might meet his ears. But no cry came, and he went on. At length he came to the village, and finding himself thus far committed to his journey, he concluded that it would be better to make haste, so as to be back as soon as possible. With this resolve he set off at a run, and soon reached the wharf.

Scarcely had he made his appearance when a wild cheer arose. At first the captain could see nothing but a crowd of boys, who gathered round him, shouting and cheering. Partly inquisitive and partly bewildered, he looked from one to the other with inquiring yet puzzled glances, and said not a word. But the boys did not keep him long in suspense. Thronging around him, they took his arms, and half led, half urged him onward to the river bank, where full before him floated the An-

telope. Even then, perhaps, Captain Corbet might not have noticed the schooner, had it not been for the cries and gestures of the boys.

The effect of this sudden and unexpected sight, as he realized its meaning, was overwhelming. He started, he stared, he rubbed his eyes, he looked at the boys, then at the Antelope, then at the boys again, and then once more at the Antelope. He could not speak a word. He stared in utter amazement. His belief in her complete and hopeless loss had been perfect; and now to see her floating before him was an overwhelming sight that deprived him of the power of speech. His emotion was so great that his aged form trembled visibly. He burst into tears; and then turning towards the boys without speaking a word, he went around among them, shaking hands with every one of them most earnestly.

"Thar," said he, at last, as he drew a long breath, "I don't think I ever in all my born days saw a day like this here. An who did it? Did youns do it all — every bit?"

"We did some of it," said Bart; "but it was Captain Pratt that did the most of it. If it hadn't been for him, it couldn't have been done at all."

"Captain Pratt? Bless his benevolent sperrit; Take me to him. Whar is he? I want to thank him."

"O, he's up in the village somewhere."

"An so this was the occasion you wanted me

for? Wal, raily. And here's the Antelope — an here am I gazing upon her well-remembered form!"

Captain Corbet spoke these words meditatively, and then made an effort to climb on board. This he soon succeeded in doing. Thereupon he feasted his eyes upon the schooner, examining her in every part.

"Muddy," said he, solemnly. "Muddy, yet lively, and fit for more vyges, so soon as you get rigged up and repaired."

"Boys," he continued, after a long silence, standing on the deck of the Antelope, and addressing his young friends, — "boys, you onman me, an the aged Corbet relapses intew a kine o' second childhood, for I hed given her up for lost. I hed seen in her ruination a warnin to me that I was to desert forevermore the rolling ocean, and confind myself to hum. But this here day an hour shows me that I have vyges yet in store, an my feelins now are ony purest jy. For the Antelope bore me o'er the briny deep for over twenty year, in sickness and health, with taters, an I always counted on our livin an dyin together. Her loss, when I thought her lost, was terewly a sunderation of my heart-strings. I felt her dume was mine. But now I see her raised up out of her muddy bed of mortal illness, an brought up, and set right side up, to walk the waters like a creetur of life, with taters. Boys, emotion overcomes me. Boys, adoo! Boys, other feelins swell within my busum. Boys, thar

is one at home that demands my return,—one known to most of ye,—about whom I feel dreadful anxious, bein as I've ben and left him in onexperienced hands, an me not knowin but he's cryin his pereficious eyes out this moment. Boys, adoo! You have a parient's gratitood!"

With these words the venerable Corbet left the schooner, and after shaking hands with a few of them, hurried home as fast as he could, while the boys, feeling now that their work was at length complete, returned to the school.

Meanwhile Pat had been left alone with the baby.

Pat knew nothing whatever about the care of babies, and had volunteered the charge of this one out of the kindness of his heart, never supposing that he would be called on to display any of the qualities of a nurse. In this, as in many other cases, ignorance made him rash in his enterprise.

For about half an hour all went on well; and Pat, after jogging the cradle for a little while, grew tired, and amused himself with looking around the room.

But from these pursuits he was roused by a movement on the part of the baby. Back, then, he darted to the cradle, with a vague fear that the baby would wake, and began rocking it vigorously. But such very vigorous treatment as this, instead of lulling the wakeful infant back again to the land of sleep, only roused him the more.

Pat, therefore, cherishing in his memory all of Captain Corbet's directions, did as he had been ordered, and rocked the cradle harder.

But the baby only grew wider awake, and began to murmur and fret.

"Woroo!—this'll niver do, at all, at all," said Pat. "He towld me to sing if it grew worse, — so sing it is, and here goes."

Whereupon Pat began a wild, shrill, crooning chant, about some personage named Biddy Malone, whose eventful history, however, he was not able to complete, for the baby, waking wide up, began to cry very vociferously.

"Sure an it's all up wid me!" said Pat. "Whatever I'll do not a one of me knows, at all, at all. He said if he got worse to take him up. I don't know about it, — but — how and iver, here goes."

So stooping down, with the best intentions in the world, Pat took the baby up in his arms, and put it on his knee, in the hope that this plan might succeed in sending it off to sleep.

But it didn't succeed any better than the other plans, for whether the baby was fastidious and didn't like Pat's treatment, or whether Pat handled him too roughly, or whether he was hungry and wanted food, or ill and wanted nursing, — whichever of these it was, — certain it is that the moment Pat took him up he sent forth a cry that struck terror to Pat's soul, and made the welkin ring.

“Och, murther ! murther !” said Pat. “What iver’ll I do at all wid it? An me to be here for more than two good hours ! Whis-s-sh, then, I tell ye ! Arrah, will ye niver be quiet? What’ll I do at all, at all. Sure an he said to walk about wid it. That same I’ll do this minute.”

So Pat rose from the chair and proceeded to walk about the room. But the new treatment did no good. On the contrary, the baby cried harder. It is to be feared that Pat’s handling was rougher than what the baby had been accustomed to, and that Pat’s patience being quite exhausted, prevented any gentleness in his treatment of his tender charge. And so it was that the baby bawled, and Pat groaned, and was completely at his wit’s end.

“Och, but it’s nearly dead an kilt I am,” cried Pat, at last. “What was it that he said to do next? He said to sing, and knock the furniture about, so he did. It’s the racket that’ll soothe him, — deed an it is, — and that’s what I’ll thry.”

With this Pat began another song, a little livelier than the last ; and walking about the room, he began to knock upon the furniture. He upset two chairs, he beat upon a tin pan, he rapped the poker against the stove-pipe, he rattled the leaf of the table, he kicked over a small table and several stools, he rolled tin kettles about the floor, until at last the room presented an appearance that made it seem as if a mad bull had been there kicking

indiscriminately. But notwithstanding Pat's efforts, he could not succeed. The baby, who at first had been silent for a few moments, perhaps from astonishment, now began louder, wilder, and more passionate cries, till the noise from those small lungs drowned the uproar that Pat was making.

"Och, murther!" cried Pat, at last. "Sure it's bothered I am, and dead bate intirely. Whativer I'll do now it ud take more'n me to tell. Sure an I've made all the noise I know. What'll I do now? There's the feed; he said so, he did, an I'll thry it."

It was Pat's last resort, and he tried it. The bowl was there where Captain Corbet had pointed it out. Pat seized it, and taking the spoon, offered it to the baby. But the baby treated his offer with scorn. He opened his mouth indeed, but it was only to let forth a yell so loud, so long, and withal so passionate, that the spoon fell from Pat's hands upon the floor, while the bowl which he had been trying to balance on his knee, followed with a crash.

Pat jumped up, still holding the baby, and walked wildly about, singing at the top of his voice, and renewing the useless racket. He went to the door and looked wildly down the road, hoping to see some signs of Captain Corbet, though time had not yet elapsed sufficient for him to reach the schooner. Then he returned to the room. Then he tried the cradle again, then walking, and again the cradle, and then once more walking.

So the time passed.

At length, on looking down the road, he saw a female. She was walking up it, and would soon come near the house. On this woman he hung all his hopes. Perhaps she was Mrs. Corbet herself. The thought filled him with joy. If not, if she was a stranger, he determined to arrest her, and make her soothe the frantic child.

The house stood back from the road about fifty yards. Pat watched through the window the motions of the approaching female, himself unseen. She drew nearer. At last her ears caught the cries of the baby. Her brows contracted. She walked faster. She reached the gate. She turned in.

“It’s herself!” cried Pat.

He sprang to the cradle, and laid the screaming child inside. Then he sprang to the back door, and, closing it, stood outside, peeping through the key hole to see the result.

The woman entered with surprise on her face. She looked all around. She called “Corbet! Corbet!” in an angry voice. But no Corbet replied. Then she went to the cradle, and took the baby in her arms, looking around with wonder in her eyes. Then she soothed the baby, which speedily became quiet.

“It’s Mrs. Corbet!” muttered Pat. “It’s herself! I’m safe! I’m free! I’ll run! Hurroo!”

And with these words he skipped away, and never stopped till he reached his own room.

That evening the boys, on their return to the hill, were very curious to know how Pat had fared with the baby. Captain Corbet had hinted that he had left his child under Pat's care, and many conjectures had been made as to the success of the new nurse. Pat, however, shunned the public eye for that evening, so that it was not until the following day that they had a chance of asking him about his experience. At first Pat fought them off, and returned evasive answers; but gradually he disclosed all. The curiosity of the boys then turned towards the meeting that may have taken place between the indignant Mrs. Corbet and the innocent captain on his return. But of the nature of that meeting they were destined to remain in ignorance. All was left to conjecture, and such powerful imaginations as theirs supplied them with many vivid fancy sketches of scenes wherein figured the justly irate wife, and the injured, yet forbearing, Corbet.

Time passed on, until at length one afternoon a thrill of excitement was thrown over the playground by the appearance of Corbet himself. Like all popular favorites, he was received with an uproarious greeting. He accepted the tribute with a mild and pensive countenance, and by his manner showed that something unusual was going to take place. What that was they soon learned. With a moistened eye, and not without emotion, he informed them that he was shortly about to

leave them, and had come down for the especial purpose of bidding them good by.

This announcement was received with astonishment and sorrow. Upon further questioning they learned that he was going to take a cargo of potatoes to Boston.

“Yes, boys,” said he, mournfully, “the aged Corbet must again become a wanderer with taters, his home the heavin billow, an his destination Bosting. An individool of his years mought have hoped to rest his aged bones under his own roof a nussin of his babby; but Fate an the wife of his boosum stud clean agin it, tickerlarly the latter, bein a high sperrit an given to domineerin. So it hev kem about that sence the resurrection of the schewner she have fairly druv me from my natyve hearthstun, to temp the dangerous wave, an cross the briny main. Hence my departoor with taters. All air ready. My boat air on the shore, an my bark air on the sea. Not that I regret the restoration of the schewner. I may be sundered far from my babby, but this I will say, that in the cabing of the Antelope reigns PEACE! Ef I can’t press my babby in my parential arms, I can hold his image in my pinin boosum. Besides, I can make money for his footoor years, which, sence I’ve ben disappointed in the Frenchman’s money-hole, ain’t to be sneezed at. Ony when any of yours goes an gits married, as some of you may some time dew, — take the word of an exile, and look out for TEMPER!”

Here Captain Corbet paused, and appeared somewhat agitated. He then prepared to bid them farewell. But the boys would not listen to this. His farewell should take place elsewhere. He was going to leave on the next day; and as that day was Saturday, they promised to be down at the wharf to see him off.

The schooner was to sail in the afternoon, and all the boys were on the spot punctually, immediately after dinner. Soon Corbet made his appearance. The meek, the gentle, and the venerable navigator looked upon them all with a mournful smile.

“ You know the song you made, boys ? ” said he, sadly, —

“ Should Captain Corbet be forgot,
A sailing o’er the sea, —

wal — don’t forget me.”

“ Never,” cried Bart, as he grasped his hand in farewell. The melancholy captain then went round, and shook hands with all of them in silence. Then he went on board of his schooner. The Antelope had been renovated. All the traces of her mishap had been obliterated. A coat of neat coal tar covered her fair outlines. Another coat of grease adorned her tapering masts. Sundry patches were here and there visible on her flowing sails. That hold which had once carried the boys over Minas Bay was now filled with potatoes. The tide was high and on the turn. The wind was fair. Corbet

took the helm. The man Wade, whose old 'oman's name was Gipson, who had been mate on their memorable cruise, sailed now with Captain Corbet in the following capacities : —

1st mate,
2d mate,
Steward,
Carpenter,
Cook,
Cabin boy,
Boatswain,
Boatswain's mate,
Crew.

The lines were cast off.

The Antelope caught the breeze, and yielding at the same moment to the tide, she moved away from the land, and down the tortuous channel of Mud Creek.

The boys followed along the banks of the creek till they reached its mouth. Here they stood in silence.

Outside, a thick veil of fog covered the water, and hid all the scene from view.

The Antelope sailed on, and, passing the boys, entered the water beyond. The boys tossed up their hats, and breaking the solemn silence, sent over the water loud shouts of good by.

The shout reached the ears of the captain. He turned. His mild face was visible for a few mo-

ments as he waved his hand again and again in token of adieu.

Then he turned again.

And so the boys stood there watching, until at last the Antelope entered a thick fog bank, and bore the captain slowly away from their gaze.

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